



# Authoritarian Inheritance and Conservative Party-Building in Latin America

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Authoritarian Inheritance and  
Conservative Party-Building in Latin America

A dissertation presented  
by  
James Ivor Loxton  
to  
The Department of Government

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the subject of  
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Dissertation Advisor: Professor Steven Levitsky

James Ivor Loxton

Dissertation Advisor: Professor Jorge I. Domínguez

## Authoritarian Inheritance and Conservative Party-Building in Latin America

### Abstract

Beginning in the late 1970s, with the onset of the third wave of democratization, a host of new conservative parties emerged in Latin America. The trajectories of these parties varied tremendously. While some went on to enjoy long-term electoral success, others failed to take root. The most successful new conservative parties all shared a surprising characteristic: they had deep roots in former dictatorships. They were “authoritarian successor parties,” or parties founded by high-level incumbents of authoritarian regimes that continue to operate after a transition to democracy. What explains variation in conservative party-building outcomes in Latin America since the onset of the third wave, and why were the most successful new conservative parties also authoritarian successor parties?

This study answers these questions by developing a theory of “authoritarian inheritance.” It argues that, paradoxically, close links to former dictatorships may, under some circumstances, be the key to party-building success. This is because authoritarian successor parties sometimes inherit resources from the old regime that are useful under democracy. The study examines five potential resources: party brand, territorial organization, clientelistic networks, business connections and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. New conservative parties that lack such inheritance face a more daunting task. Such parties may have better democratic credentials, but they are likely to have worse democratic prospects.

This argument is developed through an analysis of four parties: Chile's Independent Democratic Union (UDI), Argentina's Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE), El Salvador's Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and Guatemala's Party of National Advancement (PAN). Drawing on interview and archival data gathered during 15 months of fieldwork in five countries, this study contributes to three literatures. First, as the first book-length comparison of conservative parties in Latin America, it contributes to the literature on Latin American politics. Second, by developing a new theory of how successful new parties may emerge—the theory of authoritarian inheritance—it contributes to the literature on party-building. Third, by developing the concept of authoritarian successor parties, it sheds light on a common but underappreciated vestige of authoritarian rule and, in this way, contributes to the literature on regimes.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction: Conservative Party-Building in Latin America

This is a story about life after dictatorship—in two distinct senses. First, the study examines the political response of Latin American elites to the third wave of democratization (Huntington 1991). The third wave, which spread democracy to nearly every country in the region during the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, presented a challenge to these groups. Historically, economic elites in much of Latin America had depended on the military for protection. In the event of threats from below, they always had the option of seeking help by “knocking on the barracks door.” The third wave put an end to this tradition. For a number of reasons, including changes in the international environment, the coup option became both costly and undesirable. No longer able to rely on the military, elites found themselves political orphans and, consequently, would have to fend for themselves. This unprecedented situation is the first meaning of the phrase “life after dictatorship.”

The second meaning refers to the main puzzle that this study seeks to unravel. In response to the third wave, elites throughout Latin America turned seriously to electoral politics. The most important manifestation of this electoral turn was the formation of new conservative parties. Several of these parties quickly grew into significant electoral players and appeared to have promising futures. During the 1990s and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, many of these new parties fell into terminal crisis. While just a few years earlier scholars had believed a conservative renaissance to be underway, they now spoke of a “conservative party deficit” (Roberts 2006a). The new conservative parties that succeeded, meanwhile, shared an unusual characteristic: all of them were also *authoritarian successor parties*,

or parties founded by high-level incumbents of former dictatorships that continue to operate after a transition to democracy. What allowed such parties to thrive while other conservative parties floundered? Why did parties with deep roots in former authoritarian regimes, such as Chile's Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and El Salvador's Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), succeed, while parties with better democratic credentials, such as Argentina's Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE) and Guatemala's National Advancement Party (PAN), failed? The puzzling phenomenon of successful authoritarian successor parties is the second meaning of the phrase "life after dictatorship."

In this study, I develop a theory of *authoritarian inheritance* to explain variation in conservative party-building in Latin America since the onset of the third wave. The central argument is that new parties may inherit valuable resources from defunct dictatorships that help them to flourish under democracy. While one might expect parties with deep roots in former authoritarian regimes—regimes often guilty of massive human rights violations—to repel voters in the context of democracy, I argue that such roots are sometimes the key to electoral success. Because of their connections to previous dictatorships, such parties may inherit crucial determinants of party-building, including a party brand, territorial organization, sources of cohesion, clientelistic networks and business connections. While other new parties usually must amass these resources from scratch, authoritarian successor parties may simply inherit them and are thus born with an important advantage. Paradoxically, parties formed by individuals with better democratic credentials sometimes have worse democratic prospects, while parties whose leaders have close links to past dictatorships are sometimes born with the tools for electoral success.

In making this argument, I add to three scholarly literatures. First, I contribute to the small literature on conservative parties—and “the right,” in general—in Latin America. Political scientists have not given adequate attention to the right in Latin America and, consequently, our knowledge of it remains limited.<sup>1</sup> By carrying out the first book-length comparison of conservative parties in the region, I help to fill this relative scholarly void. Second, I contribute to the emerging literature on party-building. The study of parties has a venerable tradition within political science, especially in the context of Western Europe and the United States.<sup>2</sup> In recent years, the study of parties has enjoyed something of a renaissance, with a host of studies examining the formation and consolidation of new parties—especially, but not exclusively, in the developing world—and attempting to answer a fundamental question not always addressed in the classic literature: why do strong parties emerge in the first place?<sup>3</sup> By developing my theory of authoritarian inheritance, I contribute to this literature by highlighting a key determinant of party-building that, until now, has not been adequately appreciated. Finally, I contribute to the literature on political regimes. In recent years, scholars have examined the various ways that democracy and authoritarianism sometimes bleed into one another, studying phenomena such as “hybrid regimes,” “authoritarian enclaves” and “subnational authoritarianism.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, authoritarian successor

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<sup>1</sup> Some notable exceptions include Chalmers et al. (1992a); Gibson (1996); Middlebrook (2000a); Payne (2000); Power (2000); Roberts (2006a); Bowen (2011); Barndt (forthcoming); and Luna and Rovira (2014a).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Downs (1957); Duverger (1964); Lipset and Rokkan (1967); Sartori (2005[1976]); Panebianco (1988); Shefter (1994); and Aldrich (1995).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Kalyvas (1996); Van Cott (2005); Hale (2006); Roberts (2006b); Mainwaring and Zoco (2007); Mustillo (2007, 2009); Hicken (2009); Hanson (2010); Art (2011); LeBas (2011); Arriola (2013); Tavits (2013); Luna (2014) Ziblatt (forthcoming); and Levitsky, Loxton, Van Dyck and Domínguez (n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> On “hybrid regimes,” see Schedler (2006) and Levitsky and Way (2010); on “authoritarian enclaves,” see Garretón (2003), Valenzuela (1992) and Stepan (1988); on “subnational authoritarianism,” see Gibson (2005, 2012), Gervasoni (2010) and Giraudy (2010).

parties, one of the most common expressions of this “grey area,” have received less attention by regimes scholars. By developing this concept, highlighting its widespread nature and demonstrating its importance, I contribute to this burgeoning literature.

In this introductory chapter, I present the puzzle of variation in conservative party-building in Latin America since the onset of the third wave, before developing my theory of authoritarian inheritance in Chapter 2. This chapter is divided into six sections. In the first section, I define conservative parties and argue that they are crucial determinants of the stability and quality of democracy. In the second section, I examine the effect of the third wave on economic elites in Latin America, arguing that it served as a catalyst for the formation of new conservative parties. In the third section, I offer a definition and operationalization of party-building, and describe variation among new conservative parties in the region. In the fourth section, I discuss the study’s research design and the logic of case selection for my four main cases: Chile’s UDI, Argentina’s UCEDE, El Salvador’s ARENA and Guatemala’s PAN. In the fifth section, I address several existing explanations, including institutional design, social cleavages, “contagion from the Left,” ideology and party system variables, and argue that none of them provides a convincing explanation of variation in conservative party-building in Latin America. Finally, I conclude with a “roadmap” for the theoretical and empirical chapters to follow.

## Why Conservative Parties Matter for Democracy

Conservative parties, following Edward Gibson's (1996) influential formulation, can be defined as "parties that draw their core constituencies from the upper strata of society."<sup>5</sup> The concept of core constituencies is central to this definition: "A party's core constituencies are those sectors of society that are most important to its political agenda and resources. Their importance lies not necessarily in the number of votes they represent, but in their *influence* on the party's agenda and capacities for political action" (Gibson 1996: 7). Most parties have core constituencies. The traditional core constituency of socialist parties, for example, has been organized labor (Przeworski 1985). In the case of conservative parties, potential core constituencies include "the owners and managers of major business firms, large landowners, and finance capitalists," as well as the "descendants of aristocratic or socially prominent families, rentier groups, and high-income members of the liberal professions" (Gibson 1996: 12). The small size of conservative parties' core constituencies results in a peculiar logic of electoral mobilization. The working-class core constituency of a socialist party represents a large percentage of the electorate, and, as such, is not only important to the party's political agenda and resources, but *also* its main source of votes. The core constituency of a conservative party, in contrast, represents a miniscule percentage of the population; although it has overwhelming influence on the party's political agenda and resources, it is *not* an important source of votes. Thus, in order to win elections,

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<sup>5</sup> Other political scientists have made similar arguments about the connection between conservative parties and economic elites. Lipset (1981: 230), for example, described party politics as a "democratic translation of the class struggle," in which the left represents the lower classes and the right represents the upper classes. He quotes Robert M. MacIver, who asserts: "The right is always the party sector associated with the interests of the upper or dominant classes [and] the left the sector expressive of the lower economic or social classes" (quoted in Lipset 1981: 232).

conservative parties must attract the bulk of their votes from other sectors of society. As a result, “[t]he study of conservative party politics is...the study of the construction of polyclassist coalitions” (Gibson 1996: 8). While all parties, to some degree, must build coalitions, a “conservative party is, in fact, the most polyclassist of parties” (Gibson 1996: 17).

The sociological definition of conservative parties used here differs from the ideological definitions that some scholars favor.<sup>6</sup> The problem with ideological definitions is that conservative parties have been associated with many ideologies over the years and in different places, such as “economic liberalism, Catholic social thought, [and] developmentalism” (Gibson 1996: 8). Given this variation, ideological definitions of conservative parties make cross-case comparisons difficult. Some scholars have attempted to downplay such differences, arguing that there is a minimal ideological core to “the right.” According to Bobbio’s (1996: 69) classic formulation, for example, “the distinction between left and right corresponds to the difference between egalitarianism and inegalitarianism.” Luna and Rovira (2014b: 4) adopt a similar definition, asserting that the right is “a political position distinguished by the belief that the main inequalities between people are natural and outside the purview of the state.” Ostiguy (2009a: 11-12), who offers a particularly thoughtful account of the left-right distinction, likewise includes views on inequality and economic redistribution as a central part of his ideological definition: “The first and perhaps most well-known dimension defining the left-right axis is the *socioeconomic* policy one between, on [the left] pole, appeals for more equal economic distribution and, on [the right pole], appeals that favor established property rights and entitlements.” However, he also adds a

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<sup>6</sup> For a classic ideological definition of conservatism, see Huntington (1957).

second dimension called “attitudes toward order and authority,” in which the right is thought to be “pro-law-and-order, pro-paterfamilias, pro-authority” (Ostiguy 2009a: 12-13). Understood in this way, the right can be defined in minimalist ideological terms as a political position characterized by opposition to economic redistribution and support for traditional institutions thought to be essential for the maintenance of “order,” such as the police and military; organized religion; and traditional norms about family, gender and sexuality.

This study recognizes the utility of ideological definitions of the right insofar as it accepts that, all else equal, parties that draw their core constituency from the upper strata of society are unlikely to favor large-scale redistribution. Likewise, it accepts Ostiguy’s empirical observation that opposition to economic redistribution tends to go hand-in-hand with a preference for order and traditional institutions.<sup>7</sup> There is almost certainly an elective affinity between the sociological definition of conservative parties used in this study and the ideological definitions of the right discussed above. While mindful of this fact, in this study I adopt Gibson’s sociological definition of conservative parties, for two reasons. First, ideological definitions that conceptualize the right in terms of opposition to redistribution do not match the empirical record in a number of important cases. Christian Democratic parties, for example, which are considered to be on the right of the spectrum in much of Europe, have been instrumental in the creation of the continent’s generous welfare states (Huber, Ragin and Stephens 1993; van Kersbergen 1995). Second, defining conservative parties in terms of their core constituency rather than ideology is desirable because, as will

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<sup>7</sup> According to Ostiguy (2009a: 14-15), while these two dimensions of the left-right axis are theoretically distinct, in practice they are usually found together: “These two (sub)dimensions of left and right are quite inescapable; they are also not theoretically reducible to one another. In the absence of another relevant axis, these *oblique* dimensions could even form the basis of four political quadrants... In practice, however, these two dimensions have generally merged, tactically, and even in terms of ‘common sense,’ along a unidimensional political scale.”

become clear below, it gets to the heart of why such parties are so important for democracy in the first place. In this study, then, conservative parties are defined sociologically as parties that draw their core constituencies from the upper strata of society—but with the understanding that, while parties with an elite core constituency are likely to oppose large-scale redistribution and support order and authority, it is better to treat ideology as a “variable property” of such parties rather than a “defining property” (Gibson 1996: 8).<sup>8</sup>

Political scientists have not given adequate attention to the topic of conservative parties in Latin America.<sup>9</sup> With some notable exceptions,<sup>10</sup> most have preferred to focus instead on the other end of the political spectrum. As Power (2000: 5-6) observes: “Latin Americanists seem to have invested much effort into researching the political behavior of progressive forces (i.e., social movements, the popular Church, organized labor, and working-class parties), while the political actors that often seek to *retard* social change (the military and the right, for example) are less understood.”<sup>11</sup> The lack of research on conservative parties is unfortunate, given the importance of such parties—both when present *and* when absent. In countries where strong conservative parties are present, they are important political actors that deserve attention in their own right. In countries where strong conservative parties are absent, their very absence can have a powerful—and

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<sup>8</sup> As Gibson (1996: 8) explains: “[W]e can resolve the relationship between ideology and conservative movements by distinguishing between ‘defining properties’ and ‘variable properties.’ The former define the concept; they provide the basis for excluding specific cases from the pool of cases being compared. Variable properties are characteristics associated with the concept, but their absence from a specific case does not provide grounds for removing it from the pool of cases being compared.”

<sup>9</sup> In fairness, it is not just Latin Americanists who have neglected the right. As Lipset (1981: 17-18), Kitschelt (1994: 1), Kalyvas (1996: 6) and Ziblatt (forthcoming) have all noted, this bias is pervasive in political science.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Chalmers et al. (1992a); Gibson (1996); Middlebrook (2000a); Payne (2000); Power (2000); Roberts (2006a); Bowen (2011); Barndt (forthcoming); and Luna and Rovira (2014a).

<sup>11</sup> For a similar criticism, see Stepan (1988: 9, 129).



detrimental—impact on democratic regimes. Despite their importance, we continue to know relatively little about conservative parties in the region. To date, no book-length comparison of conservative parties in Latin America has ever been carried out.<sup>12</sup>

Conservative parties have an important impact on both the stability and the quality of democracy. The first scholar to highlight the connection between conservative parties and democratic stability was the Argentine sociologist Torcuato Di Tella (1971-1972). He argued that his country's notorious propensity for right-wing coups could be explained, paradoxically, by the absence of an electorally viable conservative party to represent upper-class interests. This pioneering observation was later shown to apply both to other Latin American countries and to other regions.<sup>13</sup> Empirically, democracy in Latin America has been interrupted far less often in countries with electorally viable conservative parties than in countries lacking such parties. In his classic study, Gibson (1996) found that countries that possessed a competitive national conservative party at the introduction of mass suffrage spent far fewer years under authoritarian rule relative to years under democracy than countries without such parties. The correlation between the existence of a strong conservative party and democratic stability is stunning: "The average ratio of years under democratic rule to years under authoritarian rule for the four countries with strong legacies of conservative party organization was almost 9 to 1. For countries with weaker legacies of national conservative party organization at the start of mass democracy, the average ratio

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<sup>12</sup> Most existing books on conservative parties in Latin America—and the right, in general—have either taken the form of edited volumes (e.g., Chalmers et al. 1992a; Middlebrook 2000a; Domínguez et al. 2011; Luna and Rovira 2014a) or case studies (e.g., Power 2000; Mizrahi 2003; Shirk 2005). Gibson's (1996) classic work, while engaging in valuable comparative analysis in the introductory and concluding chapters, is also largely a case study of the right in Argentina. For partial exceptions, see Payne (2000) and Barndt (forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> See Gibson (1996); Middlebrook (2000b); and Ziblatt (forthcoming). See also Remmer (1984); O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 62-63); Kaufman (1986); and Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992).

was 0.7 to 1.”<sup>14</sup> In short, countries with strong conservative parties spent few years under authoritarianism relative to years under democracy; countries without strong conservative parties spent many years under authoritarianism relative to years under democracy. While hardly conclusive, this empirical correlation is highly suggestive.

Why, theoretically, would we expect countries without strong conservative parties to experience more frequent interruptions of democracy? One prominent strand of the democratization literature, which emphasizes what Schmitter and Karl (1996: 56) call “contingent consent,” helps to make sense of this empirical correlation. Proponents of this view hold that it is possible to have democracy without committed democrats. This is possible, they argue, because actors may come to believe that it is in their long-term interest to respect the democratic rules of the game even if they lack a normative attachment to those rules. Przeworski (1991: 10) famously argued that “[d]emocracy is a system in which parties lose elections.” In non-democratic regimes, actors are unlikely to accept a loss of power and influence willingly; in a consolidated democracy, however, they are more inclined to do so because they know that “all such outcomes are temporary” (Przeworski 1991: 11). While losers in a democracy could, of course, attempt a coup following an electoral loss, “the risk that they will fail and be punished” (Przeworski 1991: 29) makes this course of action potentially costly. Democracy consolidates when political actors reason that the cost of an electoral loss is less than the possible cost of a failed coup. Since they know that they will have another shot at victory in the next election, they become willing to accept a short-term loss rather than take the risky action of trying to subvert the democratic system.

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<sup>14</sup> Gibson’s (1996: 25) data cover the period beginning with the “advent of mass politics” until 1990. The “advent of mass politics” varies from country to country, ranging from 1912 in Argentina to 1948 in Honduras.

But there is a flipside to this line of reasoning: “[I]f some important political forces have *no chance to win*...those who expect to suffer continued deprivation under democratic institutions will turn against them” (Przeworski 1991: 32; emphasis added). In other words, when actors know that their electoral chances are nil, they lack an incentive to play by the democratic rules of the game. Contingent consent, after all, rests on the notion that “in exchange for [the] opportunity to keep competing for power and place, momentary losers will respect the winners’ right to make binding decisions” (Schmitter and Karl 1996: 56). If losers know that their plight is not “momentary” but permanent and that they have no shot in the competition “for power and place,” they will feel less of a stake in the democratic system and may therefore refuse to “respect the winners’ right to make binding decisions.” This problem of the “permanent exclusion of the minority” (Lijphart 1977: 30) has been recognized in the literature on ethnically plural societies. In many Latin American democracies, the historical object of permanent exclusion has been a different kind of minority: economic elites. Whatever one’s opinion about this kind of exclusion, the concrete result has been frequent democratic breakdown. Lacking electorally viable conservative parties, many Latin American elites felt that they had no stake in the democratic system and thus turned to non-democratic alternatives to have their interests represented.

In post-third-wave Latin America, the likelihood of full-blown democratic breakdown has decreased for a number of reasons. Nevertheless, conservative parties remain important for democracy. First, they continue to have an impact on democratic stability, albeit not to the same degree as in the past. While it is true that coups have become much less common in the region since the third wave, they have not been eliminated entirely, as demonstrated by coups or coup attempts in Ecuador (2000), Venezuela (2002) and

Honduras (2009). In the case of Venezuela, at least, the absence of a strong conservative party following the collapse of the traditional party system, combined with the perceived threat of *Chavismo*, seems to have contributed to elites' turn to non-democratic alternatives.

Second, strong conservative parties continue to have a positive impact on the *quality* of democracy. It is true that in countries without strong conservative parties, elites in recent years have, for the most part, found ways of making their voices heard without having to knock on the barracks door. The ways they have done so, however, have been controversial and sometimes had negative effects on the region's democracies. In some cases, elites have turned to the kinds of tactics that Huntington (1968) described as "praetorianism," in which societal groups forego the niceties of electoral politics in favor of direct action, employing whatever means at their disposal.<sup>15</sup> In Bolivia, for example, the collapse of traditional conservative parties, in conjunction with the rise of the leftist Movement toward Socialism (MAS), resulted in a quasi-secessionist movement by elite groups in the country's eastern departments and violent clashes between government supporters and opposition groups.<sup>16</sup> By 2008, the situation had deteriorated to such a degree that the country "appeared on the verge of civil war" (Eaton n.d.: 32). Similarly, in 2008, Argentina saw an explosion of protests by farmers in opposition to a proposed increase in export taxes.<sup>17</sup> Lacking a conservative party to represent their interests through standard legislative means, these sectors opted for the streets, polarizing and bringing the country to a virtual standstill for

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<sup>15</sup> As Huntington (1968: 196) explains: "In a praetorian system social forces confront each other nakedly; no political institutions, no corps of professional political leaders are recognized or accepted as the legitimate intermediaries to moderate group conflict... Each group employs means which reflect its peculiar nature and capabilities. The wealthy bribe; students riot; workers strike; mobs demonstrate; and the military coup."

<sup>16</sup> See Eaton (2007, 2011, n.d.) and Lehoucq (2008).

<sup>17</sup> See Fairfield (2011) and Richardson (2009: 250-251).

several months. There was no coup in either case, but the absence of conservative parties was strongly felt and was damaging to the quality of democracy in both countries.

In other cases of conservative party weakness, elites have worked through non-conservative parties or candidates to enact their policy preferences. Stokes (2001) famously described this phenomenon as “neoliberalism by surprise.”<sup>18</sup> On multiple occasions, politicians ran for the presidency with left-leaning rhetoric, then veered to the right upon taking office and governed in close consultation with right-leaning politicians and members of the private sector (e.g., Alberto Fujimori in Peru, Carlos Menem in Argentina). Such arrangements provided short-term representation for economic elites within the democratic system. In the medium term, however, the result was partisan dealignment and, in some cases, full-scale party system collapse (Roberts n.d., Lupu n.d.). As voters became confused about what traditional parties stood for, they abandoned them *en masse* and turned to radical outsiders. The collapse of party systems and the rise of inexperienced outsiders, in turn, contributed not only to more extreme and erratic economic policy (Flores-Macías 2012), but also, in some cases, to slides into competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Loxton 2012).

In sum, conservative parties are crucial determinants of both the stability and quality of democracy. In all societies, economic elites engage in what Winters (2011) calls “wealth defense.”<sup>19</sup> Those who possess concentrated wealth—especially in the context of extreme

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<sup>18</sup> While, in theory, politicians could also run on the right and then turn left—a phenomenon we might call “socialism by surprise”—this almost never happened in post-third-wave Latin America. The only notable exception is Manuel Zelaya in Honduras. On Zelaya’s turn to the left, see Cunha et al. (2013).

<sup>19</sup> According to Winters (2011), all people—not just the wealthy—wish to protect their possessions from theft and other forms of loss. However, for the very wealthy, or what he calls “oligarchs,” the possession of fortunes makes wealth defense a particularly pressing issue. As he explains: “[T]he property obsession of oligarchs goes well beyond protecting mere possessions. The possession of fortunes raises property concerns to the highest priority for the rich... Wealth defense for oligarchs has two components—*property defense* (securing basic claims to wealth and property) and *income defense* (keeping as much of the flow of income and profits from one’s wealth as possible under conditions of secure property rights)” (Winters 2011: 7).

inequality, as in most of Latin America—will always fight to protect their property and income. That does not vary. What *does* vary is the particular form that wealth defense takes. In some countries, it occurs through electorally viable conservative parties; in others, it occurs through authoritarian rule or, in the best-case scenario, praetorianism and/or the cooptation of non-conservative political actors. The normative point of departure of this study is that peaceful and predictable wealth defense through conservative parties is preferable to wealth defense through dictatorship, direct action or subterfuge. In Gibson's (1992: 38) words: "Whether one embraces or loathes the ideology and practice of conservative movements, all should agree on the desirability of a constitutionalist Right in Latin America. The constituencies of conservative movements cannot simply be done away with. They will be vital participants of the political struggle regardless of whether they have a party to represent them or not." As discussed in the next section, the third wave seemed to offer a new beginning for conservative parties in Latin America.

### The "New Right" and Conservative Parties in Latin America

The third wave was a watershed for conservative actors in Latin America. Historically, elites in much of the region had depended on the armed forces for protection against threats from below. Lacking, in many countries, strong conservative parties to represent their interests, they turned instead to what has been described, with some irony, as the "*partido militar*"—literally, the "military party."<sup>20</sup> In El Salvador, for example, the relationship between the military and economic elites for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>20</sup> See Borón (2000: 157-158).

constituted a virtual “protection racket,” in which “the military earned the concession to govern the country...in exchange for its willingness to use violence against class enemies of the country’s relatively small but powerful economic elite” (Stanley 1996: 6-7). While El Salvador is an extreme case, the close alliance between economic elites and the armed forces—and the frequent breakdown of democracy that was the result—has been described as one of Latin America’s “established political facts” (Middlebrook 2000b: 1). The low point in terms of elite support for democracy came in the 1960s and 1970s, when “most of the groups included under the Right were clearly antidemocratic” (Chalmers et al. 1992b: 4). In the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution, rightist dictatorships came to power, or held onto power, in nearly every country in the region. While leftist soldiers seized power in some countries (e.g., Juan Velasco Alvarado in Peru, Omar Torrijos in Panama), this was largely a period of rightist authoritarianism. In 1978, however, the situation began to change with the onset of the third wave. As Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (2005: 17) document, the shift to democracy was both rapid and extensive: “The increase in the number of democracies and semidemocracies in Latin America between 1978 and 1992 was dramatic. At the beginning of this period, Latin America had only three democracies: Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. By 1990, virtually every government in the region with the exceptions of Cuba and Haiti was democratic or semidemocratic.” Almost overnight, Latin America went from being a region that was mainly authoritarian to one that was mainly democratic.

The third wave produced a rupture between elites and the armed forces. This rupture was the result of both domestic and international factors. Domestically, the military proved itself an unreliable ally of economic elites. This was most apparent in the handful of “revolutionary” military governments that came to power during this period. The

government of General Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975), for example, not only failed to protect Peruvian elites, but actually carried out reforms that “eliminated the oligarchy as a social, economic, and political class” (Durand 1997: 173).<sup>21</sup> Even in many of the rightist dictatorships, elites began to lose faith in the military’s ability to protect their interests and govern effectively. The 1976-1983 dictatorship in Argentina, for example, was marked by macroeconomic mismanagement and military adventurism, which “raised doubts about the certainty of benefits from military rule for the leaders and constituencies of Argentine conservatism” (Gibson 1996: 213). Elsewhere, the perceived inadequacy of military regimes’ response to the debt crisis of the early 1980s led economic elites and business groups to question their support for military rule (Frieden 1991). As a result, what Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 107) call the “authoritarian bargain” between elites and the military began to come undone: “As crises deepened, uncertainty over economic policy spilled over into a more general loss of confidence...in the utility of authoritarian rule.”

The other major factor that produced an elite-military rupture was a change in the international environment. This change was comprised of several parts, including the emergence of transnational advocacy networks, the growing importance of the Organization of American States and the newly democratic orientation of the Catholic Church.<sup>22</sup> But perhaps the most important factor was a shift in U.S. foreign policy. During the Cold War, the United States tolerated, and sometimes actively encouraged, coups and authoritarian rule in Latin America. Beginning with the presidency of Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), however, the United States began to support democracy in the region, and has held this pro-democratic

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<sup>21</sup> Velasco Alvarado was deeply critical of the military’s traditional relationship to economic elites, decrying its role as the “watch dog of the oligarchy” (quoted in Durand 1997: 156).

<sup>22</sup> See Keck and Sikkink (1998); Legler et al. (2007); Huntington (1991: 74-85); and Hehir (1990).



position more or less consistently ever since. As Huntington (1991: 95) put it: “In effect, under Carter, Reagan, and [George H.W.] Bush the United States adopted a democratic version of the Brezhnev doctrine: within its area of influence it would not permit democratic governments to be overthrown.”<sup>23</sup> This had a powerful impact on the calculations of actors who had previously depended on non-democratic means of interest representation: “Its positions have raised the costs of coups to potential coup players. Under such circumstances, some players that would otherwise have probably supported coups have not done so. The threat of sanctions by the United States...makes the expected benefit-cost ratio of supporting a coup unfavorable” (Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán 2005: 40).<sup>24</sup>

The result of this rupture with the military was that economic elites in Latin America effectively became political orphans. The coup option, long a key component of their political repertoire, was no longer available or even desirable. Conservative actors would now have to fend for themselves, and they would have to do so under democracy. While this situation was virtually unprecedented, Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s was not an unpropitious environment for conservative political entrepreneurship. Indeed, several factors seemed to favor the right. For one, the mode of transition to democracy in most countries was largely an elite affair, with little input from the left or popular sectors (Hagopian 1990; Karl 1990). Second, the severe economic crisis that hit the region from the early 1980s onward helped to discredit economic statism and provided an impetus for the kind of free-market economics long advocated by some sectors of the right. U.S.

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<sup>23</sup> A partial exception was Reagan’s first term (1981-1985), when the United States pursued a more security-oriented foreign policy, which in many cases meant supporting “friendly” dictatorships. But as will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 on El Salvador, even during this period the United States did not completely abandon democracy promotion, and by Reagan’s second term (1985-1989), democracy promotion had again become a central plank of U.S. foreign policy. For more, see Carothers (1991).

<sup>24</sup> For a similar argument, see Domínguez (2003: 356).

governmental agencies and international financial institutions also began to promote such policies as part of the so-called “Washington Consensus” (Williamson 1990). Third, the left found itself in its weakest position in generations, particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. With its economic proposals sullied by the debt crisis and the collapse of communism, and with labor unions and other supportive civil society organizations in decline (Roberts 1998), the left found itself “on the run or on the ropes” (Castañeda 1993: 3) nearly everywhere. Finally, the election of Pope John Paul II in 1978—and the appointment of more traditional bishops that followed—initiated a rightward shift in the Catholic Church, after a more left-leaning period during which it had declared a “preferential option for the poor.”<sup>25</sup>

Against the backdrop of the third wave and the favorable conditions described above, there emerged what observers described as a “new right” in Latin America.<sup>26</sup> This new right was distinct from the old right in a number of ways.<sup>27</sup> For one, it tended to be less closely associated with traditional landowning elites, and it made an active effort to expand its appeal to the whole of society, including the popular sectors. In addition, while it tended to take more traditional positions on issues of personal morality (e.g., divorce, abortion), it did not have the same institutional ties to the Catholic Church as in the past. Most importantly, the new right was far more liberal, in the classic sense, than the old right. In Gibson’s (1992: 35) words: “The rise of the new Right in Latin America is linked to widespread dissatisfaction with the state’s performance. The new Right is coterminous with *liberalismo*

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<sup>25</sup> See Durand (1997: 162) and Klaiber (2009).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Gaspar (1989), Gálvez (1996), Hipsher (1996), Gibson (1996), Durand (1997), Pollack (1999), Middlebrook (2000b) and chapters in Chalmers et al. (1992a).

<sup>27</sup> For a useful discussion of the differences between the “old right” and the “new right” in Peru, which is also broadly applicable to other Latin American countries, see Durand (1997).

and *anti-estatismo*.”<sup>28</sup> While in the past there had been disagreement about the relative desirability of statist or free-market economics, the new right came down firmly in favor of the latter. A consensus emerged in favor of neoliberalism—or, to use the term favored by the right, the “social market economy”—whose policy prescriptions included trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization.<sup>29</sup> These reforms, it was argued, would benefit not only economic elites, but also the poor, by creating a dynamic and prosperous system of “popular capitalism.” Latin American societies would no longer be rent by antagonistic class divisions; rather, as one slogan of the new right put it, the poor would come to view themselves as “*propietarios, no proletarios*” (property owners, not proletarians).

The most important expression of the “new right”—and the one that I focus on in this study—was the formation of new conservative parties.<sup>30</sup> Emerging in response to the third wave and the resulting loss of the coup option, these new parties “represented efforts by the ‘new Right’ to create political organizations capable of defending neoliberal economic policies in a competitive electoral environment” (Middlebrook 2000b: 27). This surge of conservative party formation, and the strong initial performances of several of these new parties, was somewhat surprising. O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 62) had famously argued that in order to ensure a smooth transition to democracy, “parties of the Right-Center and

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<sup>28</sup> See also Chalmers et al. (1992b) and Lauer (1988).

<sup>29</sup> For a history of the terms “neoliberalism” and “social market economy,” and an explanation of why those supporting such policies in Latin America typically prefer the latter, see Boas and Ganse-Morse (2009).

<sup>30</sup> Other expressions of the “new right” included civil society organizations, particularly think tanks such as Chile’s Liberty and Development (LyD), Peru’s Liberty and Democracy Institute (ILD) and the Salvadoran Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUSADES) (Johnson 1993; Mendizabal and Sample 2009); the increasing assertiveness on the part of encompassing business associations, and in some cases the formation of such associations for the first time (Bartell and Payne 1995; Durand and Silva 1998; and Schneider 2004); and social mobilization, as in Peru following Alan García’s decision in July 1987 to nationalize the country’s banking system (Durand 1997: 159-160; Vargas Llosa 1994: 27-40).

Right must be ‘helped’ to do well.” They advocated giving these parties an electoral edge by “rigging the rules” in their favor, such as by overrepresenting in Congress rural districts that tend to favor conservative parties (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 62). Yet, in the years immediately following the onset of the third wave, “conservatives did well in the electoral game without much help” (Gibson 1996: 2). It seemed that, perhaps, the long tradition of conservative party weakness in Latin America—and the associated difficulties that this posed to the stability and quality of democracy—was finally coming to an end. Such predictions, however, were overly optimistic. By the time the dust settled, it became clear that the trajectories of these new conservative parties were anything but uniform. As the next section discusses, the burst of party formation in the post-third-wave period did not usher in a new era of conservative party strength; instead, the result was dramatic variation.

### Variation in Conservative Party-Building

In order to describe variation among new conservative parties and to provide an explanation for it, it is first necessary to define *party-building*. In this study, I define party-building as the process by which new parties develop into electorally significant and enduring political actors.<sup>31</sup> Party-building is therefore distinct from party formation, i.e., the simple creation of new parties,<sup>32</sup> which is extremely common in Latin America,<sup>33</sup> examining

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<sup>31</sup> For a similar definition and operationalization, see Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck (n.d.).

<sup>32</sup> Following Van Cott (2005: 18), party formation can be defined as “the legal registration of a political party or movement and its participation in an election.”

<sup>33</sup> In their compilation of all new parties formed in Latin America between 1978 and 2005 that won at least one percent of the vote in a national legislative election, Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck (n.d.) counted 307 parties. For another illustration of the frequency of party formation in Latin America, see Mustillo (2009).

the conditions under which new parties actually take root. This definition has both electoral and temporal dimensions. Electorally, a successful party must achieve a minimum share of the vote. Temporally, a successful party must survive for a prolonged period of time. This definition thus excludes both “marginal parties,” which survive for long periods but win so few votes that they are largely irrelevant, and “flash parties,” which enjoy high levels of electoral support for a short period but quickly collapse. Successful parties, then, are those that become important electoral players and remain so for a significant period of time. This does not require that the party win the presidency; however, it does require, at a minimum, that it consistently receive a sizeable share of votes in national legislative elections.

Based on this definition, I operationalize party-building as winning at least 10 percent of the vote in five or more consecutive national legislative elections.<sup>34</sup> This operationalization differs from other studies. For example, for Middlebrook (2000b: 4), “conservative parties...are presumed to be electorally strong and capable of playing an influential role in national politics when, under conditions of open electoral competition, either a single party or a coalition of conservative forces receives at least 20-30 percent of the congressional or presidential vote in more than two successive national elections.” This operationalization, however, is both too demanding in terms of vote share and too permissive in terms of longevity. Many parties in multiparty systems (e.g., Brazil’s Workers’ Party [PT], Chile’s Socialist Party) are universally seen as important actors, despite consistently winning less than 20-30 percent in national elections. While Middlebrook allows for the possibility of crossing this electoral threshold as part of a coalition, he gives no

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<sup>34</sup> In countries with bicameral legislatures, I look at elections for the lower house; in countries with unicameral legislatures, I simply look at the results for the unicameral legislature. National legislative elections must be held at least two years apart from one another. If elections are held in consecutive years (e.g., Guatemala in 1994 and 1995, Peru in 2000 and 2001), both elections are counted, but parties that participate in them must reach the 10-percent threshold in six consecutive elections to be considered successful.

indication of the relative strength of each party within that coalition. Thus, a tiny junior partner in a coalition could qualify as a success according to his operationalization, despite winning a miniscule percentage of the vote. While there is some arbitrariness in any electoral threshold for successful party-building, I submit that 10 percent is a better baseline than 20-30 percent, since it comes closer to intuitive scores and avoids confusion about coalitions.

At the same time, Middlebrook's temporal specification that a party must maintain its electoral performance for more than two successive national elections is too permissive. Such an operationalization would result in many parties being scored as successes, despite disappearing shortly after formation. In countries that hold legislative elections every four years, like Chile or Colombia, a party would only have to remain above an electoral threshold for eight years (e.g., 1989, 1993, 1997). In a country like Argentina, which holds legislative elections every two years, a party would only have to do so for four years (e.g., 1983, 1985, 1987). Based on such a low temporal requirement, many flash parties would qualify as successes. While my requirement of five or more consecutive national legislative elections is, like all such thresholds, somewhat arbitrary, in my view it better captures the dimension of party longevity than operationalizations that set the bar lower. Similarly, I believe that my focus on legislative elections is a better barometer of party support than operationalizations like Middlebrook's that take into account results in both legislative *and* presidential elections. By their very nature, presidential elections are personalistic and, as such, they are better gauges of support for the presidential candidate than for the party as a whole.

Based on this definition and operationalization of successful party-building, it is possible to construct a universe of cases of successful and failed conservative parties. In this study, I seek to explain variation among all conservative parties formed in Latin America

between 1978 and 2000 in countries that democratized as part of the third wave. This implies both geographic and temporal scope conditions. Geographically, I restrict my attention to countries that participated in the third wave of democratization, which means that I exclude countries that remained authoritarian (Cuba) or that were already democratic (Costa Rica, Colombia and Venezuela). Cuba is excluded because it does not hold meaningful elections and because political freedoms are so restricted that it would be impossible to form a conservative party. The other three are excluded because, as countries that already had stable democratic regimes at the time of the third wave, they faced a fundamentally different political situation than democratizing countries. In particular—and not surprisingly, given the relationship between conservative party strength and democratic stability discussed above—the problem of elite representation had already been solved in each country.<sup>35</sup> Temporally, I restrict my attention to parties formed between 1978 and 2000, the years conventionally used to mark the beginning and end of the third wave in Latin America.<sup>36</sup> These years are reasonable temporal bookends, for two reasons. First, as I suggested above and as I discuss in Chapter 2, the third wave constituted a critical juncture for economic elites in Latin America. In democratizing countries, the loss of the coup option put unprecedented pressure on them to turn seriously to conservative party-building. Second, it is only with hindsight that we can know whether a new party that enjoys some

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<sup>35</sup> See Gibson (1996: 25-26). In Costa Rica, various parties provided representation for upper-class groups. In 1983, four of these fused to become the Social Christian Unity Party (PUSC) (Vega 1992; Chalker 1995; Yashar 1995). In Venezuela, elites found representation through the Christian Democratic COPEI, as well as through more conservative factions of the nominally left-leaning Democratic Action (AD) (Coppedge 2000). In Colombia, both the traditional Liberal and Conservative parties were conservative parties (Dugas 2000).

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, Domínguez (2008). In 1978, Joaquín Balaguer, the authoritarian ruler of the Dominican Republic, was defeated by the opposition in a free and fair election. In 2000, Mexico's authoritarian Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost the presidency for the first time in seventy years. Between these two bookend years, most countries in the region made the transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

success at the polls is on the road to party-building or is merely a flash party—in other words, whether it will stand the test of time. While 2000 is a somewhat arbitrary cutoff point, the fourteen years that have passed since then allow me to code definitively or make very educated guesses about the ultimate fate of parties formed prior to that year.

In this study, then, I look at all conservative parties formed in 15 Latin American countries over a period of 22 years.<sup>37</sup> Of these 15 countries, eight saw the formation of electorally significant new conservative parties between 1978 and 2000;<sup>38</sup> because three of these countries produced new parties, my universe of cases is comprised of 11 parties (see Table 1.1).<sup>39</sup> Five of these parties crossed the threshold for successful party-building: Chile's Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and National Renewal (RN); El Salvador's Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA); Brazil's Liberal Front Party (PFL); and Bolivia's Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN). The other six failed: Argentina's Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE) and Action for the Republic; Guatemala's National Advancement Party (PAN); Brazil's Progressive Party (PP); Panama's Nationalist Republican Liberal Movement (MOLIRENA); and Peru's Liberty Movement (ML).

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<sup>37</sup> The 15 countries are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

<sup>38</sup> By "electorally relevant," I mean any party that won 5 percent or more in a single national legislative election. This is a low requirement, but it excludes micro-parties that failed to become even momentarily influential.

<sup>39</sup> One important conservative party in Latin America that gained new prominence in the 1990s and 2000s, but which I do not examine in this study, is Mexico's National Action Party (PAN). Because it was formed in 1939, it falls well outside the temporal bounds of this study. On the PAN, see Mizrahi (2003) and Shirk (2005). Two other "parties" that I exclude for different reasons are Fernando Collor de Mello's National Reconstruction Party (PRN) in Brazil and Jorge Serrano Elías' Solidarity Action Movement (MAS) in Guatemala. By all accounts, these were utterly personalistic vehicles formed for the exclusive and short-term purpose of supporting Collor and Serrano's presidential bids in 1989 and 1990, respectively. Since neither was a serious attempt at party-building, the subsequent disappearance of the PRN and MAS cannot be interpreted as "failure." On Collor and the PRN, see Weyland (1993) and Moraes (2002), and on Serrano, see McCleary (1999).



Table 1.1. New conservative parties in Latin America (1978-2000)

Country	Name	Formation	Outcome
Argentina	Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE)	1982	Failure
Argentina	Action for the Republic	1997	Failure
Bolivia	Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN)	1979	Success
Brazil	Liberal Front Party (PFL)	1985	Success
Brazil	Progressive Party (PP)	1995	Failure
Chile	Independent Democratic Union (UDI)	1983	Success
Chile	National Renewal (RN)	1987	Success
El Salvador	Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA)	1981	Success
Guatemala	National Advancement Party (PAN)	1985	Failure
Panama	Nationalist Republican Liberal Movement (MOLIRENA)	1981	Failure
Peru	Liberty Movement	1987	Failure

Of the successful parties, the most clear-cut cases are ARENA, the UDI and RN.

Each of these parties has been a major vote-getter in multiple electoral cycles, and each seems poised to maintain this position for the foreseeable future. Another clear case of success is the PFL, which also comfortably meets this study's criteria for success.<sup>40</sup> In the past decade, however, it has seen its vote share decline, and its future looks uncertain. The most borderline case is ADN. The party meets this study's criteria for success, winning well over 10 percent of the vote in five consecutive legislative elections between 1979 and 1997. It was personalistic, however, and when its leader, Hugo Banzer, died in 2002, it collapsed. The other parties are all cases of failure—though, like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each failed in its own way.<sup>41</sup> In some cases, such as the PAN and MOLIRENA, parties did well in a few elections, then saw their vote shares plummet before crossing this study's temporal threshold.

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<sup>40</sup> In a book published fifteen years after Brazil's transition to democracy, Power (2000: 81) wrote that "in terms of consistent access to political power, the PFL has been the greatest success story among the political parties of the New Republic."

<sup>41</sup> For a thoughtful analysis of the different ways that new parties can fail, see Mustillo (2009).

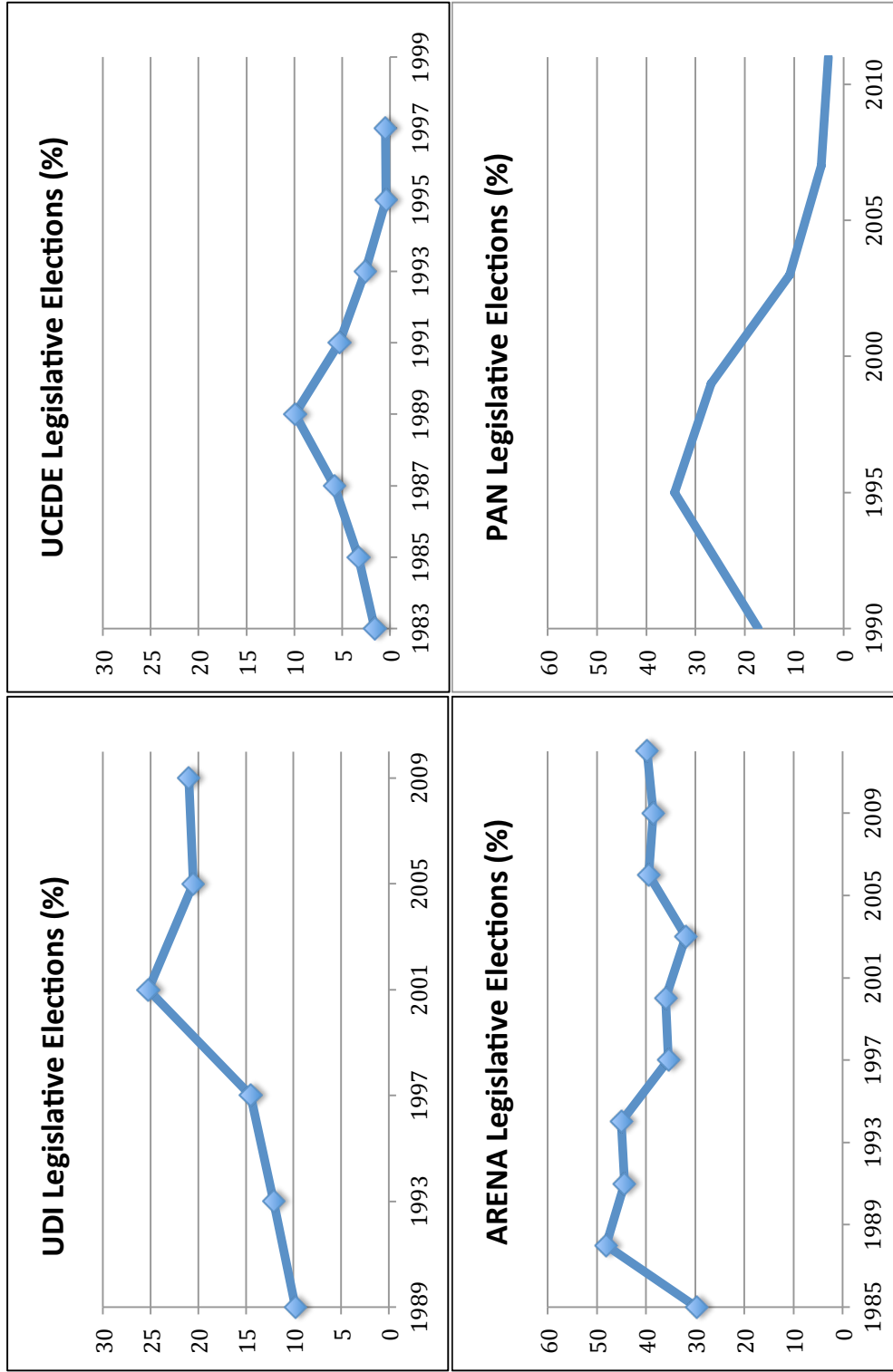
In other cases, new parties simply failed to launch. The UCEDE, for example, despite being greeted by great fanfare when it was formed, never became a truly important player. What explains this variation in conservative party-building in Latin America?

### Case Selection and Research Design

In this study, I seek to explain the variation in conservative party-building in Latin America described above. To this end, I compare four new conservative parties: Chile's Independent Democratic Union (UDI), Argentina's Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE), El Salvador's Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and Guatemala's National Advancement Party (PAN). Each of these parties was formed in the 1980s in the midst of (or in anticipation of) a transition to democracy, and each was an exemplar of Latin America's "new right." All of them became electorally relevant actors in the short term and appeared to have a good chance of taking root. Despite initial enthusiasm, however, their long-term trajectories diverged dramatically: while the UDI and ARENA became the most successful new conservative parties in the region and clear cases of party-building, the UCEDE and the PAN both ended in failure. As I explain below, the variation on the dependent variable of party-building—combined with a host of other relevant similarities and differences—makes these four parties an ideal set of cases for comparison, and allows the researcher to gain leverage on the broader puzzle of variation in conservative party-building outcomes in Latin America. Below I provide thumbnail sketches of each party before discussing the logic of case selection and the study's overall research design.

Chile's UDI was created on 24 September 1983, against the backdrop of the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. The country had been under military rule since the coup d'état against the leftist government of Salvador Allende in 1973. In 1982-1983, in the wake of an economic crisis and an explosion of opposition protests, the military regime began to turn away from its free-market policies and also initiated a process of political liberalization or "opening." As part of this shift, some factions within the regime saw their influence decline, particularly a group of conservative Catholics known as the "*gremialistas*." Under the leadership of *gremialista* leader Jaime Guzmán, who had also been the regime's most important civilian adviser and the "architect" of its 1980 constitution, the UDI was formed as a means of protecting the regime's policies in the event of a possible transition to democracy. In subsequent years, the party consistently supported a program of free-market economics, traditional views on issues of personal morality and support of the policies and institutions of the former military regime. The UDI participated in all elections from the transition to democracy onward, enjoying spectacular success. In the "founding election" of 1989, the party won 9.8 percent of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies, and then expanded its vote share in following elections. In 1991, Guzmán was assassinated, but the party managed to survive the loss of its most important leader. In 2001, it won 25.2 percent of the vote, making it the single most-voted-for party in Chile—a position that it maintained in all subsequent legislative elections. In 2010, the UDI also reached the executive branch as part of a coalition government led by National Renewal (RN) candidate Sebastián Piñera.

Figure 1.1. Four Parties' Electoral Performance Over Time



Source: UDI data from Chile's Servicio Electoral; UCEDE data from Middlebrook (2000a); ARENA data from Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas; and PAN data from Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas.

Argentina's UCEDE was created on 21 June 1982, against the backdrop of the military dictatorship that had been in power since 1976. One week earlier, the country had surrendered to British forces following the short but bloody Falklands/Malvinas War. Badly discredited by its defeat in the war and reeling from the 1982 region-wide debt crisis (the same crisis that threatened to topple the military regime in Chile), it was evident that the Argentine regime was on its last legs. In anticipation of a likely transition to democracy, Álvaro Alsogaray, a man *The New York Times* would later describe as “the high priest of free-market economics in Argentina,”<sup>42</sup> created the UCEDE in order to represent the ideas of classic liberalism in the coming democratic regime. While Alsogaray was a well-known public figure who had formed part of both democratic and authoritarian governments in the past, he had not participated in the most recent dictatorship (1976-1983), and in fact had been among the most prominent right-wing critics of the regime. In the “founding election” of 1983, the UCEDE won a mere 1.6 percent of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies. However, it quickly “emerged as the country’s fastest-growing political party, and its third electoral force” (Gibson 1990: 183), winning, at its peak, 9.9 percent in coalition with smaller parties in the 1989 legislative election. The UCEDE’s rapid rise was “widely greeted as evidence that the long-sought democratic mass conservative party might be in the making” (Gibson 1990: 180). Despite such fanfare, the party collapsed after President Carlos Menem, the Peronist candidate elected in 1989, chose to enact much of its economic program, and to appoint several of its leaders to key positions. This led to a mass defection of UCEDE leaders and supporters, and the virtual disappearance of the party by the mid-1990s.

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<sup>42</sup> See Shirley Christian, “Buenos Aires Journal; Tango With Peronist? Who’s Afraid?,” *The New York Times*, July 4, 1989.

El Salvador's ARENA was created on 30 September 1981, against the backdrop of a brutal civil war and fifty years of rightist military rule. In 1979, the old regime began to break down after junior officers seized power through a palace coup and began to enact left-leaning policies, which they hoped would drain support from leftist guerrillas then active in the country. Many in the security apparatus disagreed with this policy shift; ignoring the dictates of the new junta, they unleashed a clandestine wave of extreme violence against suspected "subversives." No individual was more closely associated with these "death squad" killings than Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, the former deputy director of military intelligence. Under pressure from the United States, the new authorities announced that elections for a constituent assembly would be held in 1982. In order to compete in this upcoming election, D'Aubuisson created ARENA, campaigning on a program of extreme anticommunism and the promise of a no-holds-barred military solution to the country's civil war. Later, the party shifted its programmatic emphases to the free market and the issue of crime. From the beginning, ARENA was a spectacular electoral success. In the 1982 constituent assembly election, the party won 29.3 percent—and never again fell below this number. In 1989, it won the presidency and held onto it for twenty years. In terms of its performance in both legislative and executive elections, ARENA was not only the most successful new conservative party in Latin America, but the most successful new party of any kind.

Finally, Guatemala's PAN was created in 1985 in the midst of Guatemala's partial transition to democracy.<sup>43</sup> After decades of military rule and in the face of a guerrilla insurgency, competitive elections were held for a constituent assembly in 1984, and general elections were held in 1985. The PAN was initially created to support the candidacy of

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<sup>43</sup> Guatemala's National Advancement Party (PAN) should not be confused with Mexico's National Action Party (PAN). Despite sharing an acronym, the two parties are completely unrelated.

Álvaro Arzú, a successful businessman, in his bid for the mayoralty of Guatemala City in the 1985 general election. While the PAN was technically a “civic committee”<sup>44</sup> at first and did not legally become a party until May 1989, this was largely a juridical fiction, and its founders had national aspirations from the beginning. The party was a champion of the free market, though it was also highly pragmatic. For slightly over a decade, the PAN enjoyed considerable electoral success. In 1990, the first national election in which it participated, it won 17.3 percent of the legislative vote, and in the 1995 and 1999 elections, it won 34.3 and 26.9 percent, respectively. In 1995, the PAN won the presidency (Álvaro Arzú), and in 1999, its presidential candidate came in second place (Óscar Berger). Despite this strong start, the PAN collapsed after suffering two major schisms: the departure of Arzú in 2000, and the departure of Berger in 2003. Berger’s departure was particularly devastating, since he was to be the PAN’s presidential candidate in that year’s elections.<sup>45</sup> In the aftermath of these schisms, support for the PAN rapidly dwindled, with the party winning a mere 4.6 percent in the 2007 election and 3.1 percent in 2011. Although the PAN still exists, today it is a marginal actor and does not meet this study’s criteria for success.

Why did the UDI and ARENA succeed, while the UCEDE and the PAN failed?

This is the specific question that I attempt to answer in this study, with the aim of producing broadly generalizable findings about the determinants of conservative party-building in Latin America. To this end, I combine these four cases in different ways to create three separate

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<sup>44</sup> The legal requirements to register parties—which were necessary to run for national office in Guatemala at the time—were quite onerous, requiring the collection of signatures and a minimum organizational presence in most of the country’s departments. However, candidates could run for *municipal* office with only a “civic committee,” a legal entity for which it was much easier to qualify. As Ajenjo and García (2001: 282) explain: “Electoral civic committees are conceived of as transitory political organizations destined to become political parties if they [eventually] satisfy the requirements established in the Electoral Law.”

<sup>45</sup> Berger went on to win the 2003 presidential election without the nomination or support of the PAN, running as the candidate of a coalition of small parties known as the Grand National Alliance (GANA).

paired comparisons: the “most similar” cases of Chile and Argentina, the “most similar” cases of El Salvador and Guatemala and the “most different” cases of Chile and El Salvador (see Figure 1.2).<sup>46</sup> In recent years, these classic methods of comparison have come under fire from diverse quarters. Quantitatively-oriented scholars have long argued that the small number of cases used in such comparisons makes it difficult to generate valid causal inferences.<sup>47</sup> More surprisingly, some qualitatively-oriented scholars have also begun to question the value of small-*n* comparisons. These scholars argue that the real contribution of qualitative research comes from *within*-case analysis, and that the inclusion of multiple cases in a qualitative research design is therefore of dubious analytical value.<sup>48</sup> As Goertz and Mahoney (2012: 89) put it: “[U]nless the N of the study is more than a handful of cases, it is unrealistic to believe that these small-N comparative methods—by themselves—offer a strong basis for most kinds of causal inference. Without any within-case analysis, the leverage gained for testing explanations when moving from one case to three or four cases is modest. The within-case analysis must do the heavy lifting for hypothesis testing.” Instead of relying primarily on paired comparisons, some scholars urge researchers to pursue causal

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<sup>46</sup> These two types of comparison have a long pedigree in political science, corresponding to Mill’s “method of difference” (most similar) and “method of agreement” (most different). In the former, the investigator seeks cases that are similar in all respects except for the dependent variable and the hypothesized independent variable; in the latter, he or she seeks cases that are different in all respects except for the dependent variable and the hypothesized independent variable. Both types of comparison are designed to make causal inferences, albeit through different logics. In “most similar” comparisons, the reasoning is similar to that of an experiment: if two cases are *similar* in all respects except for the dependent variable and the hypothesized independent variable, one can infer that the latter was the cause of the former. In “most different” comparisons, the reasoning is the opposite: if two cases are *different* in all respects except for the dependent variable and the hypothesized independent variable, then one can infer that the latter was the cause of the former. To be sure, perfect comparisons do not exist in the real world, i.e., cases that are alike in all respects except for the variables of interest, or that are different in all respects except for the variables of interest. Some cases come much closer to these ideal typical comparisons than others, however, and can help to generate causal inferences. For discussions of these classic methodologies, see Lijphart (1971) and Ragin (1987).

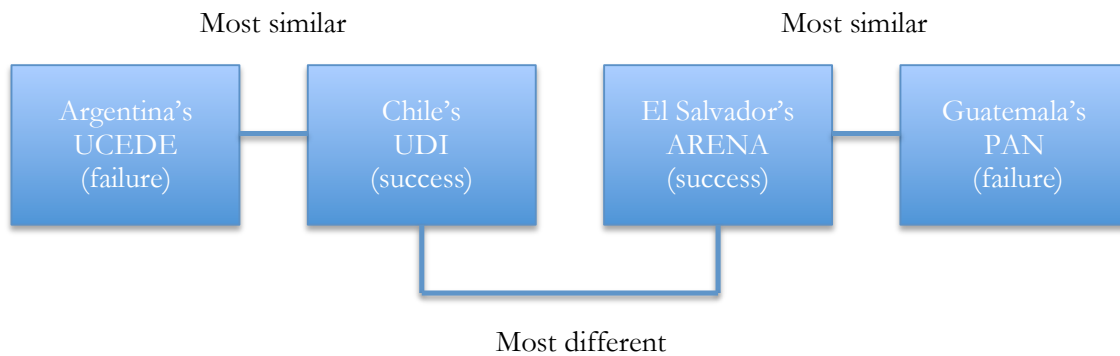
<sup>47</sup> For a classic critique, see King, Keohane and Verba (1994).

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, Goertz and Mahoney (2012: 9-10, 87-89).



inference through the intense study of individual cases, or what is known as “process tracing.”<sup>49</sup> At the very least, they argue that the causal inferences derived from paired comparisons should be supplemented with the causal inferences derived from process-tracing—in effect, combining small-*n* comparisons and within-case analysis.<sup>50</sup>

Figure 1.2: Four Cases, Three Paired Comparisons



Although mindful of arguments about the limitations of small-*n* comparisons and the value of within-case analysis, I am more convinced by Slater and Ziblatt’s (2013) spirited defense of what they call “the enduring indispensability of the controlled comparison.” First, as these authors point out, small-*n* comparisons and within-case analyses are not really alternatives; they are complementary and, in fact, have traditionally gone together hand-in-glove. In practice, controlled comparisons always involve dialogue among cases *and* careful

<sup>49</sup> As George and Bennett (2005: 6) explain: “In process-tracing, the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case.” Thus, “[t]he process-tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process—the causal chain and causal mechanism—between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable” (George and Bennett 2005: 206).

<sup>50</sup> See George and Bennett (2005: ix, 160, 215).

analysis of each individual case.<sup>51</sup> Second, and more importantly, controlled comparisons can help to generate external validity, i.e., explanations capable of traveling beyond individual cases to the larger population.<sup>52</sup> At the very least, they can “offer direct evidence of limited transferability and the theoretical foundations for wider transferability” (Slater and Ziblatt 2013: 13). In order for such comparisons to be effective, however, it is essential to select cases that embody representative variation and, to the degree possible, control for rival hypotheses (Slater and Ziblatt 2013: 11-14). To be sure, perfect comparisons do not exist in the real world, i.e., cases that are alike in all respects except for the variables of interest, or that are different in all respects except for the variables of interest. Some comparisons come much closer to this ideal than others, however, allowing the researcher to discount the likelihood of certain alternative hypotheses being the cause of the outcome to be explained. When this technique of eliminating alternative hypotheses through careful case selection is combined with in-depth analyses of each individual case, and the cases selected are broadly representative of the larger population, the stage is set for the generation of causal inferences that possess at least a degree of external validity.

The four cases I examine meet these conditions. First, they are representative of the variation on the dependent variable found in the larger case universe: two are cases of successful party-building (UDI and ARENA), and two are cases of failure (UCEDE and PAN). Second, the countries where these parties emerged have enough similarities and

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<sup>51</sup> Thus, whenever a researcher compares two cases, what he or she is really doing is carrying out simultaneous process-tracing on each individual case, or what Tarrow (2010) describes as “dual process tracing.”

<sup>52</sup> As Gerring explains: “Internal validity refers to the correctness of a hypothesis with respect to the sample (the cases actually studied by the researcher). External validity refers to the correctness of a hypothesis with respect to the population of an inference (cases not studied)” (quoted in Slater and Ziblatt 2013: 5). However, there is also a “more colloquial understanding...[of these] two types of validity: namely, as the validity of a causal argument within a single country case (i.e., internal), as opposed to beyond that country case (i.e., external)” (Slater and Ziblatt 2013: 5-6).

differences to control for several rival hypotheses with reasonable confidence. To begin with, Argentina and Chile are strong candidates for a “most similar” comparison.<sup>53</sup> Despite varying on the dependent variable of conservative party-building (the UDI succeeded, the UCEDE failed), these neighboring countries share a number of analytically relevant features. Both are among the most economically developed countries in Latin America. Both are largely homogenous with respect to language and ethnicity. Both have long traditions of presidentialism and bicameralism. Both had coups in the 1970s, which gave rise to similar regimes that have been described as “bureaucratic authoritarian” (O’Donnell 1978) or “neoconservative” (Schamis 1991). Both underwent transitions to democracy in the 1980s. And both saw the emergence of new conservative parties in the early 1980s in response to the debt crisis and resulting political turmoil: the UCEDE in 1982 and the UDI in 1983. Of course, there are also a number of differences between the two cases: Chile traditionally had a large peasantry, while Argentina did not; Argentina is federal, while Chile is centralist; Chile’s UDI had an important religious component, while Argentina’s UCEDE did not; Argentina’s new democracy used proportional representation to elect Congress, while Chile used an unusual “binomial” electoral formula;<sup>54</sup> and Argentina’s most recent military regime collapsed ignominiously and was widely considered a failure, while Chile’s was considered relatively successful (at least, on its own terms) and was thus able to exit from a position of strength. Finally, and most significantly for this study, the UDI and the UCEDE had very

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<sup>53</sup> As such, there is a tradition of using Chile and Argentina in “most similar” comparisons. See, for example, Remmer (1984), Frieden (1991), Gill (1998), Schneider (2004), Bergman (2009), Fairfield (2010), Sánchez (2011) and Kurtz (2013).

<sup>54</sup> The binomial system will be discussed in Chapter 4. The system was designed by the outgoing military authorities with the explicit aim of overrepresenting the right in Congress. However, while it is useful for explaining the inflated number of *seats* won by Chile’s conservative parties (both the UDI and RN), it cannot explain changes over time in the number of *votes* won by these parties. In fact, as I argue in Chapter 4, the existence of the binomial system, far from being the cause of the UDI’s success, may have actually resulted in its true electoral strength being underreported for the first ten years of Chilean democracy.

different relationships to their countries' most recent military regimes: while the UDI was an authoritarian successor party, the UCEDE was not. Conceivably, any of these differences could have been the cause of the UDI's success and the UCEDE's failure. As such, I examine them in the "existing explanations" section below and in the empirical chapters and conclude that the main cause of variation between the two parties was their access (or lack thereof) to authoritarian inheritance, which itself was partially endogenous to the success (or failure) of the outgoing military regime and the mode of transition to democracy.

El Salvador and Guatemala are even stronger candidates for a "most similar" comparison.<sup>55</sup> Despite varying on the dependent variable of conservative party-building (ARENA succeeded, the PAN failed), these neighboring countries share a large number of analytically relevant features, and followed remarkably parallel trajectories in the 1980s and 1990s. Both are among the least developed countries in Latin America. Both are geographically close to the United States and have been extremely susceptible to U.S. influence. Both countries' economies during the twentieth century were based on coffee produced through labor-repressive agriculture. Both had been under military rule for decades by the 1980s. Both experienced guerrilla insurgencies and brutal state-led repression in the 1970s and 1980s. Both experienced palace coups (1979 in El Salvador, 1982 in Guatemala) that indirectly set in motion transitions to democracy. Both held competitive elections for constituent assemblies in the early 1980s, followed by general elections in the mid-1980s. Both countries' new democratic regimes were characterized by presidentialism, unicameralism and proportional representation. Both had powerful Christian Democratic

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<sup>55</sup> As such, there is a tradition of using El Salvador and Guatemala in "most similar" comparisons. See, for example, Allison (2006), Stanley (2007), España Nájera (2009) and Schneider (2012).

parties that governed during the second half of the 1980s and then collapsed in the 1990s. Both signed peace accords with leftist guerrillas in the 1990s (1992 in El Salvador, 1996 in Guatemala).<sup>56</sup> And both saw the emergence of new conservative parties in the 1980s that were created in anticipation of an imminent transition to democracy. Of course, the two cases also differ in important ways: Guatemala has a large indigenous population, while El Salvador does not; Guatemala has a large evangelical Christian population, while El Salvador's is comparatively small; El Salvador's 1979 coup brought to power a left-leaning military junta, while Guatemala's brought to power Efraín Ríos Montt, an ideologically ambiguous figure; and El Salvador's guerrillas were very strong at the time of the peace accords, while Guatemala's were weak. Finally, ARENA and the PAN had very different relationships to outgoing military regimes: while ARENA was an authoritarian successor party, the PAN was not. Again, any of the differences listed above could, in theory, have been the cause of the UDI's success and the UCEDE's failure. As such, I examine them in the "existing explanations" section below and in my empirical chapters, and conclude that the main cause of the two parties' differing levels of success was their access (or lack thereof) to authoritarian inheritance. I argue that this difference, in turn, was partially the result of the unusual nature of the Ríos Montt dictatorship (1982-1983), which, for reasons I discuss in Chapter 8, helped to impede the formation of a conservative authoritarian successor party in Guatemala.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Moreover, in both cases the presidency was in the hands of ARENA and the PAN, respectively, at the time that the peace accords were signed: Alfredo Cristiani in El Salvador, and Álvaro Arzú in Guatemala.

<sup>57</sup> As I explain in Chapter 8, Ríos Montt used extreme violence against alleged supporters of the country's guerrillas during his short-lived dictatorship. However, while he was undoubtedly right-wing on the issue of "law and order," he was not particularly right-wing on socioeconomic issues, earning him the enmity of economic elites. After being overthrown in a coup, Ríos Montt formed a political party, the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), which gained a large popular following. While the FRG was a clear case of an authoritarian successor party, it was *not* a conservative party as defined in this study. Instead, its frequent use of

Finally, Chile and El Salvador are strong candidates for a “most different” cases comparison.<sup>58</sup> Although both countries gave rise to successful new conservative parties (UDI and ARENA, respectively), they are otherwise as different as any two countries in Latin America. Chile is one of the richest countries in the region; El Salvador is one of the poorest. Chile has a long history of competitive elections; El Salvador does not. El Salvador was in a state of full-blown civil war in the 1980s; Chile was not. Chile’s military dictatorship was explicitly anti-party and did not hold regular elections; El Salvador’s military had traditionally governed through an “official” party and unfair elections.<sup>59</sup> El Salvador’s new democracy used proportional representation to elect its unicameral legislature; Chile’s used a unique “binomial” system to elect its bicameral legislature. Finally, their modes of transition to democracy were very different: while in Chile the transition largely followed the military’s own timeline and occurred on its own terms, in El Salvador it occurred after a palace coup and under tremendous pressure from the United States. Despite these differences, the two cases share a conspicuous similarity: both the UDI and ARENA had deep roots in former dictatorships. This common genealogy, I argue, enabled both parties to benefit from authoritarian inheritance. To be sure, if my argument about the causal importance of authoritarian inheritance on conservative party-building were based on this “most different”

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“populist”—even leftist—rhetoric alienated economic elites. The result was that the coalition of military hardliners and economic elites that underlay El Salvador’s ARENA was split in Guatemala: military hardliners backed the FRG, while economic elites backed the PAN.

<sup>58</sup> For another “most different” comparison of El Salvador and Chile, see Koivumäki (2010).

<sup>59</sup> Between the late 1940s and the early 1960s, this party was called the Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification (PRUD). Thereafter, it was called the Party of National Conciliation (PCN).

comparison alone, it would not be convincing.<sup>60</sup> However, when the findings of this comparison are added to the findings of the two “most similar” comparisons described above, and these are added to the findings of the within-case analyses that I carry out on the individual cases, it becomes possible to make a causal inference about the relationship between the dependent variable of conservative party-building and the hypothesized independent variable of authoritarian inheritance with a reasonable degree of confidence.

The data used in this study were gathered during 15 months of fieldwork that I carried out in Chile, Argentina, El Salvador and Guatemala between September 2011 and November 2012, and between January and February 2014. During this time, I was given a remarkable level of access to the four parties that I was researching. In total, I carried out 90 formal interviews with activists and high-profile party leaders, including two former presidents and large numbers of former ministers, senators, deputies and mayors. I also had countless informal conversations with party activists, and was invited to attend events normally reserved for party members, such as the UDI’s 2011 General Council and ARENA’s 2012 General Assembly. In addition to carrying out interviews, I collected a large amount of archival materials, particularly party documents (party histories, electoral materials, internal memos, etc.) and newspaper articles from local press archives. Where possible, I also drew on memoirs written by party leaders about their experiences. I supplemented these various primary sources with a range of secondary sources, particularly when giving historical background necessary to understand each case. I made particular use of Spanish-language secondary sources largely unknown to most English-speaking readers.

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<sup>60</sup> On the potential weaknesses of “most different” comparisons, see Ragin (1987: 36-38). However, when used in conjunction with other kinds of analysis, such as “most similar” comparisons and process-tracing, this kind of comparison can add an additional degree of plausibility to the findings generated by these other methods.

## Existing Explanations

In this study, I argue that the main determinant of variation in party-building outcomes in Argentina, Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala was authoritarian inheritance, and that, moreover, this factor can explain variation in the broader universe of conservative parties in Latin America formed since the onset of the third wave. As authoritarian successor parties, I argue that Chile's UDI and El Salvador's ARENA inherited valuable resources from the old regime, which in turn were crucial for their democratic success. In contrast, as parties without deep roots in the old regime, Argentina's UCEDE and Guatemala's PAN did not have access to authoritarian inheritance, which made their attempts at party-building more difficult and contributed to their failure. In Chapter 2, I lay out this theory of authoritarian inheritance in detail. Before making this argument, however, it is essential to address existing explanations. In this section, I examine five kinds of existing explanation in particular: (1) institutional design, (2) social cleavages, (3) "contagion from the Left," (4) available space in the party system and (5) ideology. (I also discuss mobilizing structures, which, strictly speaking, do not constitute an alternative explanation, since I incorporate them into my theory of authoritarian inheritance. However, because of the prominence of this argument in the literature, and because I expand on it in an original way, I discuss it here.) I argue that none of these existing arguments provides a convincing explanation of variation in conservative party-building in contemporary Latin America.



The first kind of existing explanation concerns institutional design. Four versions of the institutionalist argument are worth considering: regime type, presidentialism, legal requirements for registration and electoral formula. With respect to regime type, Aldrich (1995) famously argued that politicians' "turn to parties" could be understood as a byproduct of democracy itself.<sup>61</sup> Because parties make it easier for politicians to achieve some of their key objectives (e.g., winning elections, passing legislation), he argued that rational politicians would naturally form parties. This argument does an admirable job of explaining conservative party formation in Latin America since the onset of the third wave: all four of my cases were formed in anticipation of an impending transition to democracy. Yet, while it can explain the common outcome of party *formation*, i.e., why parties emerged, it cannot explain variation in party-*building*, i.e., why only some parties became electorally significant and enduring political actors, for the simple reason that democracy took root in all four of the countries that I examine. In other words, a constant value on the independent variable (democracy) cannot explain variation on the dependent variable (party-building).

Another potential institutionalist explanation is presidentialism. In an important contribution, Samuels and Shugart (2010) argue that presidentialism can have a powerful impact on internal party dynamics. Specifically, they argue that it can exacerbate principal-agent problems, with the party (principal) losing control of its presidential nominee after he or she wins office (agent). This occurs, first, because presidentialism encourages the selection of individuals who have widespread electoral appeal but are not necessarily party insiders and, second, because the party cannot "fire" a president with a fixed term. While

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<sup>61</sup> For a more bottom-up account of the apparent relationship between democratic elections and one aspect of party-building—the development of partisan attachments—see Lupu and Stokes (2010).

Samuels and Shugart's (2010) argument is not directly about variation in party-building, one can imagine how the principal-agent problems they describe could be damaging for new parties, with schisms emerging between party loyalists and supporters of the president or presidential candidate. In fact, it was precisely a schism of this nature that provoked the downfall of Guatemala's PAN. Like regime type, however, presidentialism cannot explain variation in party-building outcomes in the cases that I examine, since all four countries had presidential systems. Once again, a constant value on the independent variable (presidentialism) cannot explain variation on the dependent variable (party-building).

An additional institutional argument focuses on what Van Cott (2005: 24) calls "the permissiveness of the institutional environment." In her study of ethnic parties in Latin America, she finds that one important determinant of party formation is the existence of an "open institutional environment," particularly low requirements for party registration (Van Cott 2005: 8, 27). This argument, however, is not relevant for the cases that I examine. All four of these parties formed and thus, by definition, cleared any legal hurdles to registration; where they vary is in their level of success *after* formation. An institutional feature with more potential relevance that she highlights is decentralization. According to Van Cott (2005: 25), "[n]ew parties are likely to be more successful in countries that are decentralized rather than centralized because new parties have the opportunity to develop at geographical levels where the cost of party formation is lower, that is, transportation and advertising costs are smaller, a small organization is needed to mount a campaign, and fewer signatures are required to appear on the ballot."<sup>62</sup> But this factor also cannot explain variation in conservative party-building. The UCEDE in Argentina—which, as the only federal country of the four cases

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<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between subnational office-seeking and party-building, see Holland (n.d.).

that I examine, was the most decentralized and thus, presumably, the most amenable to party-building—ended in failure.<sup>63</sup> In contrast, the UDI and ARENA, which both operated in more centralized contexts, succeeded.

A final institutional feature that must be considered is electoral formula. One of political science's best-known arguments about parties is "Duverger's Law," which posits that a simple-plurality electoral formula is likely to produce a two-party system (Duverger 1964: 217). Conversely, proportional representation should produce a multi-party system (Duverger 1964: 239). There are three main reasons why the formula for translating votes into seats cannot explain variation in conservative party-building. First, as Remmer (2008) has argued, electoral rules in Latin America are quite fluid; moreover, she argues that changes to these rules tend to be a *reflection* of shifting partisan fortunes rather than their cause.<sup>64</sup> Second, the argument about electoral formula and parties is primarily about party *formation*, i.e., why parties emerge, rather than party-*building*, i.e., why parties succeed. Third, even if these last two observations were not true, there is little variation in Latin America with respect to electoral formula: all countries in the region have either proportional

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<sup>63</sup> Could Van Cott (2005) have got it backwards? Rather than facilitating party-building, might federalism actually make it more difficult for some reason and, if so, could this explain why no successful conservative party-building has occurred in Argentina? I find this possibility unconvincing for three reasons. First, there is no intuitive reason why federalism should make party-building more difficult. It is easy to understand why, in theory, federalism might *help* new parties, i.e., by allowing them to win power at the subnational level before scaling up to the national level, but it is not clear why the opposite should be true. Second, federalism has not impeded conservative party-building in other Latin American countries or in other regions. Historically, conservative parties such as Mexico's PAN and Venezuela's COPEI have emerged and found success under federal systems. Since the third wave, this feat has been repeated by Brazil's PFL. If one widens the scope to look at democracies in other regions, such as the United States, Canada, Germany or Australia, the notion of federalism impeding conservative party-building becomes even less plausible. Finally, federalism has not prevented the construction of strong parties in Argentina itself. While it is true that Argentina has long been conspicuous for its lack of a strong conservative party, the country nevertheless produced two of the strongest parties in Latin America's during the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the Radical Civic Union (UCR) and the Peronists (PJ).

<sup>64</sup> This is not a specifically Latin American phenomenon. As Ahmed (2013) illustrates in her study of electoral system in European countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is a long history of political incumbents choosing electoral formulas that will either consolidate their positions or protect them from challengers.

representation or mixed-member proportional systems. The major exception is Chile, whose unusual “binomial” system, it would seem, might actually help to explain the UDI’s success. This system—which was designed in the waning days of the Pinochet dictatorship with the express aim of overrepresenting the right in Congress—almost guarantees the runner-up electoral coalition (usually the UDI-RN coalition known as the Alliance) a similar number of seats as the winner, while simultaneously creating high barriers for entry for new parties. Yet, as will be explained in Chapter 4, while the binomial system can help to explain the number of *seats* that the Alliance won, it cannot explain its share of *votes*. It is especially unhelpful for explaining changes over time, which in the case of the UDI is a serious problem, since its vote share more than doubled during the 1990s. Finally, given that the binomial system creates high barriers for entry, any explanation of the UDI’s success must explain how the party was able to surmount this barrier in the first place. In other words, even if one thinks that the binomial system was an important factor in the UDI’s long-term electoral success, one must still explain how the party performed so well in the “founding election” of 1989, since, without this, it could never have benefited from the system in future elections. Moreover, even if the binomial system did help the UDI, it cannot explain the success of parties such as ARENA in El Salvador, where this electoral formula was not used.

### *Social Cleavages*

The second kind of existing explanation concerns social cleavages. In their seminal analysis of the origins of party systems in Western Europe, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue that party systems emerged as a result of intense conflict around four key social cleavages: rural elites vs. urban elites, workers vs. owners, dominant national cultures vs. local cultures,

and church vs. state.<sup>65</sup> As populations mobilized around these societal fault lines, parties emerged to represent the different sides. When mass suffrage was introduced, a process of “freezing” (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 50) took place, whereby the party systems that had emerged around these earlier cleavages became permanently locked in. Could the presence or absence of particular kinds of societal cleavage (and resulting societal mobilization) help to explain variation in conservative party-building in contemporary Latin America?<sup>66</sup>

Two of the cleavages that Lipset and Rokkan (1967) mention have been identified as important historical determinants of conservative party-building in Latin America, and, in theory, might explain variation in party-building attempts since the third wave. The first is the conflict between rural and urban elites. According to Gibson (1996: 29-36), countries that experienced intense conflicts between town and country in the post-colonial period were more likely to see the rise of strong conservative parties (e.g., Chile, Colombia, Uruguay), while countries where the main conflict was among different regional elites were more likely to experience conservative fragmentation (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Peru). In the first type of conflict, parties calling themselves “conservative” emerged to represent rural elites, and parties calling themselves “liberal” emerged to represent urban elites.<sup>67</sup> A related argument holds that a key determinant of conservative party-building is the existence of a

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<sup>65</sup> As Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck (n.d.) note, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) did not argue that latent societal cleavages automatically gave rise to political parties, an argument sometimes falsely attributed to them. Instead, they emphasized the importance of the intense *conflicts* that often broke out around such cleavages, which in some cases became so polarizing that they “brought European countries to the point of civil war” (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 22). For a similar argument about the importance of conflict, see Huntington (1968).

<sup>66</sup> For a skeptical view about the applicability of Lipset and Rokkan’s model to Latin America, see Dix (1989).

<sup>67</sup> Despite their names, occasional ideological differences and the animosity that often existed between these classic parties in Latin America, all of them would be considered “conservative parties” in the sociological sense, i.e., “parties that draw their core constituencies from the upper strata of society” (Gibson 1996: 7).

large sedentary peasantry that can serve as a source of “captive” votes.<sup>68</sup> These arguments, however, do not provide convincing explanations of variation in contemporary Latin America. While it is true that ARENA has enjoyed strong support in rural areas, the party has not been used to represent rural elites in a conflict against urban elites in the way described by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) and Gibson (1996). Instead, this elite conflict—which did, in fact, exist in El Salvador—largely played out *within* ARENA, with different interest groups in competition for influence but united by a shared loyalty to the party.<sup>69</sup> The argument works even less well for the UDI, which was not created to protect rural elites and did not depend on rural votes for its success; on the contrary, urban slums were one of the party’s major sources of electoral support. Among the two cases of failure, it is true that Argentina is highly urbanized, which, conceivably, might have contributed to the UCEDE’s failure; this is not a satisfying explanation, however, given that Guatemala’s PAN, which operated in one of the most rural countries in Latin America, also failed to take root.<sup>70</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that even in countries where, historically, the captive vote of peasants was an important determinant of conservative party success, this became increasingly difficult to maintain over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of electoral

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<sup>68</sup> See McGuire (1995a), Smith (1978: 21) and Remmer (1984: 57).

<sup>69</sup> As will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, among the most important early backers of ARENA were large landowners who had historically depended on labor-repressive agriculture, and who saw their livelihoods threatened by policies undertaken by reformist governments in the 1980s. More urban and commercial economic elites also existed, however, and these saw their influence within ARENA increase dramatically during the first decade of the party’s existence. For a description of this process, see Wood (2000a, 2000b).

<sup>70</sup> In 1982, the year that the UCEDE was formed, 84 percent of the Argentine population was urban. In 1985, the year that the PAN was formed, only 39 percent of the Guatemalan population was urban. See World Bank: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>. Accessed on February 27, 2014.

innovations like secret voting and the “Australian ballot.”<sup>71</sup> While the phenomenon of conservative parties reliant on the support of semi-dependent rural populations has not been entirely eradicated in Latin America, it has come increasingly under attack.<sup>72</sup>

The second cleavage that has been identified as an important historical determinant of conservative party-building in Latin America is the one between church and state. According to Middlebrook (2000b: 7-26), countries that experienced especially divisive conflicts over the status of the Catholic Church were more likely to give rise to strong conservative parties (e.g., Chile and Colombia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Venezuela in the 20<sup>th</sup> century). In these countries, conservative parties were formed as defenders of the church and, given the salience and cross-cutting nature of religion, they were able to attract votes from large swaths of the population. Like the rural-urban conflict, however, religion cannot explain contemporary variation in conservative party-building. It is true that the UDI has always had an important religious component, strongly identifying with conservative Catholicism and allying itself with groups such as Opus Dei and the Legionaries of Christ.<sup>73</sup> This factor may have contributed to the UDI’s success by attracting the support of more religious-minded elites and donors, and by providing a source of cohesion to the party’s leaders. However, it cannot explain the success of parties such as ARENA, the PFL and ADN, none of which made religion a central component of its identity or appeal. Thus, while the argument about religious conflict may help to explain the success of the UDI, it cannot explain variation in the broader universe of new conservative parties.

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<sup>71</sup> These electoral reforms made it far more difficult for landowners to monitor the votes of peasants. For a sophisticated analysis of how the introduction of the “Australian ballot” in Chile in 1958 undermined landlords’ ability to control peasants’ voting behavior, see Baland and Robinson (2008, 2012).

<sup>72</sup> See Montero (2012).

<sup>73</sup> See Luna et al. (2013).

A third existing explanation is Duverger's (1964: xxvii) well-known argument about "contagion from the Left." In his view, mass-based conservative parties emerged in 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe as a byproduct of suffrage expansion and the boost that this gave to socialist parties. Because socialist parties lacked access to the state and other forms of influence, he argued they had a strong incentive to build grassroots party organs in their quest for power. Conservatives, fearing the rise of the left, responded by building their own grassroots party structures to defend themselves from this threat.<sup>74</sup> Huntington (1968: 419) made a similar argument about the role of leftist threats in the formation of conservative parties, and argued that it applied to Latin America, as well.<sup>75</sup> In essence, these authors argue that a strong leftist threat is a crucial determinant of conservative party-building. While they are somewhat vague about the mechanisms through which this variable operates, one can glean that a leftist threat may give conservative party-builders an *incentive*, a *model* for emulation and a *source of votes* from parts of the electorate also fearful of the left.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> In Duverger's (1964: xxvii) words: "The creation of electoral committees tends...to be a left-wing effort because fundamentally it is advantageous to the Left: the task is, by means of these committees, to make known new elites which will be able to compete in the minds of the electorate with the prestige of the old elites. But the Right is obliged to follow the example in order to retain its influence: this phenomenon of contagion from the Left will be seen again and again as we analyze the structure of the parties."

<sup>75</sup> In Huntington's (1968: 419) words: "The competitive struggle to expand participation and organize parties may also develop from the efforts of a social force to enter the political system. In this case, the social force normally creates a political party which functions initially outside or on the fringes of the political system and then attempts to penetrate the system. Many of the socialist parties in western Europe followed this pattern as have several parties in Latin America. This challenge to the existing system often stimulates the factional leaders and traditional leaders to coalesce in opposition to the new threat. Organization from below stimulates organization above, the result tending to be a multi-party system in which each major social force has its own political vehicle." For a similar argument, see Shefter (1994: 6-12) on "countermobilization."

<sup>76</sup> First, a leftist threat may give conservatives a powerful *incentive* to turn seriously to party-building in order to defend themselves. In Duverger's (1964: xxvii) words: "[T]he Right is obliged to follow the example [of the Left] in order to retain its influence." Second, a leftist threat in the form of mass socialist parties may give conservatives a model for *emulation*. In Europe, conservatives learned from the socialists about a new form of organizational technology: the permanent, grassroots party "branch," which was a "Socialist invention," as opposed to the non-permanent "group of notabilities" that he called the "caucus," which conservative parties



In this study, I accept that a leftist threat had an impact on conservative party-building in contemporary Latin America, but I argue that the effects were mainly *indirect*. As I discuss in Chapter 2, in countries that experienced a particular kind of leftist threat immediately before an authoritarian regime was installed or immediately after it ended—specifically, when a government of the radical left *actually assumed power*—the regime in question was generally better able to present itself as having “saved” the country. When incumbents of this regime later formed an authoritarian successor party, the party could draw on traumatic memories of the leftist threat to bolster its own brand. I also accept that in the case of Guatemala, the absence of a strong leftist party—in contrast to neighboring El Salvador, where, from the 1990s onward, the leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) was a powerful electoral force<sup>77</sup>—may have indirectly contributed to the PAN’s demise.<sup>78</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 8, the collapse of the PAN was the result of two devastating party schisms in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It is possible that, had there existed a strong leftist party, the fear of it taking power might have motivated PAN leaders to work out their differences rather than abandoning the party in the face of disputes. This counterfactual scenario, however, is highly speculative. While it cannot be ruled out as a contributor to the PAN’s schisms, I demonstrate in Chapter 8 that there were other causes

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had traditionally preferred (Duverger 1964: 24, 18). Finally, a leftist threat may provide conservative parties with a source of votes. In his attempt to explain the decline of Liberal parties, for example, Duverger (1964: 214) argued that “the appearance of a Socialist party naturally took from [the Liberals] a section of their left-wing support, whilst fear of the ‘Reds’ threw another section into the arms of the Conservatives.”

<sup>77</sup> The FMLN began its life as a confederation of guerrilla organizations, but it transformed into a highly successful political party after the signing of peace accords in 1992. In Guatemala, the guerrilla confederation known as the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) also became a political party after the signing of peace accords in 1996. Unlike the FMLN, however, the URNG did not become a successful party. For an analysis of the different levels of success of the FMLN and URNG, see Allison (2006).

<sup>78</sup> For an argument linking the weakness of conservative parties in Guatemala to the absence of a strong leftist party, see Lemus (2012). He argues that conservative party weakness was the result of indifference by the private sector, and the private sector was indifferent because there was no serious partisan threat from the left.

of these schisms that can actually be demonstrated and that were not related to the lack of a strong partisan left. Specifically, I argue that because the PAN was born with a weak territorial organization, it turned to local bosses from other parties for assistance. Although these bosses joined the PAN, they were not part of the founding generation and did not feel a strong sense of loyalty to the party's founders. As we will see, it was these disloyal, peripheral newcomers who led the internal revolts that ultimately brought the party to ruin.

However, I find the notion of a leftist threat being the *direct* cause of conservative party-building in contemporary Latin America unconvincing, for a few reasons. First, and most importantly, Duverger's (1964) argument about "contagion from the Left," as originally formulated, is about party *formation*, not party-*building*. It can help to explain why conservatives might turn seriously to parties; however, in cases where they already have turned to parties but then see their efforts fail, as in the cases of Argentina's UCEDE or Guatemala's PAN, the argument has little to say. Second, as Ziblatt (forthcoming) demonstrates, Duverger's (1964) "contagion from the Left" argument does not actually provide an accurate account of the origins of mass conservative parties in Europe.<sup>79</sup> Since this was the set of cases for which the argument was initially developed, it calls into question its broader validity. Third, just as it does not provide an accurate account of the origins of European conservative parties in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it does not accurately describe the origins of conservative parties in contemporary Latin America. It is true that in El Salvador and Chile, the rise of ARENA and the UDI, respectively, occurred against the

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<sup>79</sup> In Ziblatt's (forthcoming) words: "The standard narrative that universal suffrage 'arrived' in Europe, giving rise to highly organized and mass socialist parties...prompting what Duverger (1954) evocatively termed 'contagion from the left,' and thereby demanding Conservative counter-organization, is inaccurate. The long-term project of building up the central party organization of conservative parties run by professionals, permanent local associations, and strong intra-party linkages was often completed far *before* the arrival of universal male suffrage, let alone the emergence of full-blown democracy."

backdrop of a serious leftist threat. However, as will be described in the empirical chapters, ARENA and the movement that eventually evolved into the UDI (*Movimiento Gremial*) were both initially formed to resist the policies of *Christian Democrats*, not leftist parties. Since Guatemala also had a strong Christian Democratic party that had played a similar historical role to that of El Salvador's Christian Democrats, it further calls into question the validity of the argument. Finally, if "contagion from the Left" were an important determinant of conservative party-building, we would expect to find strong conservative parties emerging in recent years in Latin America in the countries with the most powerful and radical leftist governments: Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia. Despite strong leftist threats, however, strong conservative parties remained conspicuously absent in all three countries.<sup>80</sup> The same is true for Argentina during the Peronist presidencies of Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-present). While Peronism is notoriously difficult to pin down ideologically,<sup>81</sup> both Kirchner and Fernández clearly governed from the left. Nevertheless, no strong conservative party emerged in Argentina during the 2000s.

#### *Available Space in the Party System*

A fourth existing explanation focuses on available space in the party system. The premise underlying this perspective is that new parties do not operate in a vacuum; they operate within a party *system*, and the characteristics of other parties in that system can have a powerful impact on the performance of the new party. One potentially important characteristic of the party system is whether space for a hypothetical new party is already

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<sup>80</sup> For an analysis of the failure in Bolivia to convert the "conservative autonomy movement" in the country's eastern departments into a conservative party, see Eaton (n.d.).

<sup>81</sup> For an analysis of Peronism and the difficulty of defining it in left-right terms, see Ostiguy (2009b).

occupied by another party. According to Hug (2001), the formation of new parties can be understood as a strategic interaction between would-be party-builders and the leaders of existing parties. When a new policy issue emerges (e.g., environmentalism, immigration) and existing parties fail to take it up, new parties will emerge to champion the issue (e.g., Greens, anti-immigrant parties). An implication of this argument is that if existing parties vacate a section of the policy spectrum, new parties are likely to emerge to fill the vacuum and represent the now-neglected issues. Van Cott (2005) goes further, arguing that available space in the party system is relevant not only for party formation but also for party-building, i.e., the success of new parties. Thus, in her study of ethnic parties, she finds that “the decline of the left...contributed significantly to the success of ethnic parties. It opened space on the left of the political spectrum for ethnic parties to make class-based appeals to the poor, adjusted the balance of power between the traditional left and indigenous movements in favor of the latter, and made experienced political operatives and resources available to fledgling ethnic parties” (Van Cott 2005: 8-9). One can imagine a similar process playing out on the other side of the spectrum, with the decline of a traditional competitor—for example, a Christian Democratic party—facilitating the rise of a new conservative party.

One country where the decline of a traditional competitor may have facilitated the rise of a new conservative party is El Salvador.<sup>82</sup> There the decline of the centrist Christian

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<sup>82</sup> It is true that ARENA, especially in its early years, viewed the Christian Democrats not as a competitor—that is, as an ideologically proximate political force in competition for roughly the same electorate—but instead as an arch-nemesis. For example, ARENA founder Roberto D’Aubuisson defined Christian Democrats as “Marxist-Leninist communists,” and insisted that “what is concealed under lamb’s wool is nothing more than communists obedient to Russia, Cuba and Nicaragua” (quoted in Craig Canine and Robert Rivard, “El Salvador: The Making of a President,” *Newsweek*, 5 March 1984). There was little basis for this accusation, however. By all serious accounts, it was a centrist party—sometimes more center-left, sometimes more center-right—with a diverse electorate, not a stalking horse for international communism. As a result, when the party collapsed in the 1990s, it freed up the votes of at least some right-leaning ex-Christian Democrats for ARENA. For more on El Salvador’s Christian Democrats, see Webre (1979) and Williams and Seri (2003).

Democrats in the late 1980s and early 1990s seems to have opened space in the party system and given ARENA a significant boost.<sup>83</sup> However, this is not a convincing explanation of broader variation in conservative party-building in contemporary Latin America, for a few reasons. First, ARENA was already an electoral force to be reckoned with well before the decline of the Christian Democrats. Even if it had just maintained the level of support that it won while the Christian Democrats were at their peak, it still would have been an unambiguous case of successful party-building. Second, the simultaneous decline of the Christian Democrats in neighboring Guatemala—a party that had historically played a role very similar to that of the Christian Democrats in El Salvador<sup>84</sup>—did not pave the way for the long-term success of the PAN. If the creation of a vacancy in the party system through the collapse of a traditional competitor were truly an important determinant of conservative party-building, we would expect the PAN to have benefited from this factor in the same way that ARENA apparently did. Third, in Chile, the UDI succeeded despite the existence of a highly crowded field: not only did it have to compete for votes with RN, the country's other major conservative party, but also with the Christian Democrats.<sup>85</sup> This case suggests that available space in the party system is not an exogenous and immutable factor; on the contrary, it is possible for a new party to carve out space for itself in a crowded field. Finally, in Argentina, a country without competing conservative parties or a Christian Democratic

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<sup>83</sup> Thus, while the Christian Democrats' share of the legislative vote declined from 52.4 percent in 1985 to 17.9 percent in 1994, ARENA increased its share from 29.7 percent in 1985 to 45.0 percent in 1994. The role of the Christian Democrats' decline in the rise of ARENA will be discussed in Chapter 7.

<sup>84</sup> See Williams and Seri (2003).

<sup>85</sup> Although Christian Democratic parties in Latin America have sometimes had a center-left orientation, the Chilean Christian Democrats in the 1990s demonstrated a level of ideological conservatism—particularly during the presidency of Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1994-2000)—that prompted Gibson (1996: 228-229) to speculate about the possibility of Chile's upper strata and business community switching allegiances to the party.

party—and thus the country with the greatest vacancy in the party system—the UCEDE failed to launch. In this respect, it is the opposite of Chile: while in Chile, the UDI successfully elbowed its way into a crowded field, in Argentina, the UCEDE faced a wide-open field but nevertheless failed to fill the available space in the party system.

### *Ideology*

A fifth existing explanation is ideology. According to Hanson (2010), who has made this argument most forcefully, it is difficult to build parties for the same reason that it is difficult to build any large organization: the logic of collective action. As Olson (1965) famously argued, organizations, which provide collective goods to their supporters, are difficult to build because potential supporters know that they will receive benefits from the organization regardless of their own efforts and, as such, will be tempted to “free ride” on the work of others. If too many potential supporters free ride in this way, the organization will fail. According to Hanson (2010: 65), the logic of collective action presents a serious obstacle to party-building: “Party organizations, to the extent they are successful, constitute collective goods for those they represent. Because all members and social constituents of a party necessarily benefit from its success whether or not they have contributed to it individually, rational politicians and citizens should ‘free ride’ on the efforts of others to build and maintain political parties.” However, ideologies, which Hanson (2010: xix) defines as “proposals made by individuals to define clear and consistent criteria for membership in a proposed polity,”<sup>86</sup> may help party-builders to overcome this collective action problem. As

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<sup>86</sup> This definition of ideology, at first glance, seems rather strange. In practice, however, Hanson seems to code movements as “ideological” in much the same way that most observers would: “The range of possibilities for defining such criteria is, of course, vast: ideological Leninists demand a polity based on the proletariat and led by Marxist revolutionary professionals; Nazis fight for the political supremacy of racially pure ‘Aryans’; and

he explains: “Clear and consistent ideologies, I argue, can have the effect of artificially elongating the time horizons of those who embrace them. By presenting an explicit and desirable picture of the political future, successful ideologues can induce at least some instrumentally rational individuals to embrace a long-run strategy of cooperation with other converts” (Hanson 2010: xiv). In short: “no ideologies, no parties” (Hanson 2010: xv).

It would seem that this argument applies well to the cases that I examine in this study. The UDI in Chile and ARENA in El Salvador both stand out for the intense ideological commitments of their leaders, just as Guatemala’s PAN stands out for its lack of a clear ideological profile.<sup>87</sup> Yet the argument does not apply at all to Argentina’s UCEDE, whose leaders were also intensely ideological.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, if anything, the commitment to the ideology of classical liberalism played a role in the UCEDE’s downfall, since they were willing to abandon the party and work with the government of another party (that of Peronist president Carlos Menem) if, in so doing, they could put their ideology into effect. In other words, the ideological commitments of UCEDE leaders trumped their loyalty to the

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ideological liberals set out a vision of politics built around rational individual citizens and property owners. All three ideologies, however, can be usefully understood as proposing clear and consistent principles of political membership” (Hanson 2010: xix, fn. 16). Or, as he explains elsewhere: “[T]he definition of ideology as any formal, consistent definition of the criteria for membership in a desired polity does happen to encompass a very large number of the key individuals, and movements, generally associated with this term. Revolutionary leaders such as Cromwell, Robespierre, Lenin, Hitler, Pol Pot, and Khomeini clearly count as ideologues in this sense; so, too, would ‘extremist’ politicians in mainstream democracies such as Le Pen, Haider, and David Duke. At the same time, more positive figures from the liberal perspective, such as Locke, Montesquieu, or Madison, can be understood as ideological innovators by this definition as well” (Hanson 2010: 48). For a defense of this definition of ideology, see Hanson (2010: 43-48).

<sup>87</sup> The UDI’s ideology is a combination of conservative Catholicism, free-market economics and anti-communism. ARENA’s ideology was initially defined by extraordinarily intense anti-communism; later, it toned down its anti-communism somewhat and adopted free-market economics as a core ideological tenet. The PAN, in contrast, always attempted to avoid ideological labels, insisting that it was, above all, a “pragmatic” party. These parties’ ideological profiles (or lack thereof) will be discussed in the empirical chapters.

<sup>88</sup> On the UCEDE’s ideology, Gibson (1990: 180) writes: “Raising the ideological banner of *liberalismo*, the UCEDE mobilized the upper social strata of the Buenos Aires region around its electoral project of anti-populism, free market reform, and formal adherence to constitutional democracy.”

UCEDE itself. The same was true for Mario Vargas Llosa's Liberty Movement in Peru, which was also intensely ideological but nevertheless collapsed after President Alberto Fujimori put into practice many of the party's cherished ideological principles.<sup>89</sup> In fairness, Hanson (2010: xiv) argues that "ideologies...are typically necessary (although not sufficient) for the mobilization of enduring, independent national party organizations in uncertain democracies," and, as such, the existence of ideological parties that failed, such as the UCEDE or the Liberty Movement, does not necessarily invalidate his argument. However, it does cast doubt on the ability of ideology to explain variation in conservative party-building in contemporary Latin America. In addition, the existence of multiple successful parties in Latin American history with vague and/or fluctuating ideologies (e.g., Peronism in Argentina, APRA in Peru) suggests that ideology has had less of an impact on party-building outcomes in Latin America than in the cases that Hanson (2010) examines.<sup>90</sup>

### *Mobilizing Structures*

A final argument that must be considered has to do with what LeBas (2011) calls "mobilizing structures." Strictly speaking, this is not an alternative explanation, since I incorporate its core insight into my theory of authoritarian inheritance. Because of its prominence in the literature, however, and because I expand on it and apply it in an original way, it is worth briefly discussing the argument here. One of the most robust findings in the party-building literature is that parties that can inherit and build upon the infrastructure of

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<sup>89</sup> Like Argentina's UCEDE, the ideology of Peru's Liberty Movement was defined in terms of *liberalismo*, anti-populism and democracy. For more on the Liberty Movement, see Requena (2010).

<sup>90</sup> Hanson's (2010) argument is based on his analysis of three "post-imperial democracies": Third Republic France, Weimar Germany and Post-Soviet Russia.



preexisting organizations are born with an important advantage. The reason is straightforward: “Organization building does not come naturally or automatically to political actors. It is a difficult, time-consuming, costly, and often risky enterprise” (Kalyvas 1996: 41). However, if a new party can simply inherit an organization, it will be spared much of this labor and can hit the ground running. Scholars have identified several kinds of preexisting organization that have served as mobilizing structures for new parties,<sup>91</sup> including Catholic organizations for Christian Democratic parties (Kalyvas 1996); indigenous movements for ethnic parties (Van Cott 2005); corporatist labor unions for opposition parties (LeBas 2011); nationalist organizations for anti-immigrant parties (Art 2011); church structures for conservative parties (Ziblatt, forthcoming); and perhaps also business conglomerates for what Barndt (forthcoming) calls “corporation-based parties.”<sup>92</sup>

In this study, I build upon the findings of these important works, but add to them in two ways. First, I highlight a source of mobilizing structures that has not been adequately appreciated: authoritarian regimes.<sup>93</sup> If Catholic groups help to create a Catholic party, indigenous groups help to create an indigenous party, or labor unions help to create a labor

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<sup>91</sup> Classic works in the parties literature have also noted the role of preexisting organization, as in Duverger’s (1964: xxx-xxxiv) discussion of parties with “extra-parliamentary origins” and Shefter’s (1994: 5-6) discussion of “externally mobilized parties.”

<sup>92</sup> According to Barndt (forthcoming), individual corporations in Latin America have pioneered a new model of party-building. In this new model, businesses draw on their corporate resources (finance, personnel, infrastructure, advertising, etc.) in order to build their own made-to-fit parties rather than backing existing parties. Of the three cases that he cites in support of his theory, however, one no longer exists (Bolivia’s Civic Solidarity Union [UCS]), one has nearly disappeared (Ecuador’s Institutional Renewal Party of National Action [PRIAN]), and one (Panama’s Democratic Change) is a personalistic vehicle with a highly uncertain future, particularly after the defeat of its candidate in the 2014 presidential election. It is not clear, then, whether this new route to party-building is viable.

<sup>93</sup> A partial exception is LeBas (2011). Although she emphasizes the importance of labor unions, which scholars have long considered as important mobilizing structures for parties, the unions in question had been created by past authoritarian regimes and, as such, were a “a legacy of past periods of authoritarian rule” (LeBas 2011: 5).

party,<sup>94</sup> this is not especially surprising. However, if an organization formed by a military regime and responsible for widespread “death squad” killings lays the groundwork for a highly successful party—the case, as we will see, of El Salvador’s ARENA—this is much less expected. Second, I demonstrate that the logic of inheritance applies not only to organization, but also to a number of other potential resources, including brand, source of cohesion, business connections and clientelistic networks. While many parties inherit resources from preexisting entities, the transference between authoritarian regimes and democratic parties has been less explored by scholars. It is one thing for a social movement to bequeath a popular brand to a party, as in the case of Bolivia’s Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), or for a former insurgent group to bequeath cohesion rooted in joint struggle, as in the case of “insurgent successor parties.”<sup>95</sup> However, if a regime accused of human rights violations bequeaths a popular brand (e.g., *Pinochetismo*) to a party, or if a group accused of carrying out thousands of extrajudicial executions believes *itself* to have been the victim of persecution and the protagonist of a heroic struggle (e.g., ARENA), this is surprising. In short, while I fully accept the basic insight of the literature on mobilizing structures, I add to it by highlighting the surprising versatility of resources—including, but not limited to, mobilizing structures—inherited from authoritarian rule.

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<sup>94</sup> On the importance of organized labor for the creation of the British Labour Party and Socialist parties elsewhere in Europe, see Duverger (1964: xxx).

<sup>95</sup> On brand inheritance, see Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck (n.d.). On insurgent successor parties, see Holland (n.d.). On the link between struggle and party cohesion, see Chapter 2 and Levitsky and Way (2012).

## Roadmap

In this introductory chapter, I presented the puzzle of variation in conservative party-building in Latin America since the onset of the third wave. I described the diverse trajectories of several promising new conservative parties, and argued that this variation could not be explained by existing explanations, such as institutional design, social cleavages, “contagion from the Left,” ideology and party system variables. I also introduced my four main cases—Chile’s UDI, Argentina’s UCEDe, El Salvador’s ARENA and Guatemala’s PAN—and explained the study’s research design and logic of case selection. Finally, I previewed my theory of authoritarian inheritance, which holds that resources inherited from authoritarian regimes can help new conservative parties to succeed under democracy. I suggested that this theory could explain not only variation among my four cases but also variation in the broader universe of new conservative parties in Latin America.

In the remaining chapters, I lay out the theory of authoritarian inheritance, and then illustrate it through a close examination of my four cases. In Chapter 2, I present the theory of authoritarian inheritance, and argue that it can help to explain variation in conservative party-building in Latin America. I also flesh out the concept of authoritarian successor parties, and look at three “critical antecedents” that help to explain why authoritarian successor parties emerged in some countries but not others. In Chapters 3 and 4, I examine Chile’s UDI, a successful conservative party and an authoritarian successor party. In Chapter 3, I examine the origins of the party in the 1973-1990 military regime. In chapter 4, I examine the various forms of authoritarian inheritance from which the UDI benefited, and argue that these were the main determinants of its success under democracy. In Chapter 5, I

examine Argentina's UCEDE, a case of failed party-building, and not an authoritarian successor party. I argue that one of the reasons it failed was that it was not able to draw on authoritarian inheritance. In Chapters 6 and 7, I examine El Salvador's ARENA, a successful conservative party and an authoritarian successor party. In Chapter 6, I examine the origins of the party, examining the role of its founder, Roberto D'Aubuisson, in the pre-1979 military regime, and later his role in "death squad" violence. In Chapter 7, I examine the various forms of authoritarian inheritance from which ARENA benefited, and argue that these were the main determinants of its success under democracy. In Chapter 8, I examine Guatemala's PAN, a case of failed party-building, and not an authoritarian successor party. I argue that one of the reasons it failed was that it was not able to draw on authoritarian inheritance. In the concluding chapter, I recap the major argument of this study, and consider the future of conservative party-building in Latin America, as well as various issues related to the global phenomenon of authoritarian successor parties.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Authoritarian Inheritance: A Theory of Conservative Party-Building**

On 11 September 1990, a delegation of party leaders from the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) presented General Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean army commander-in-chief and former dictator, with a letter of gratitude.<sup>1</sup> The letter, which had been signed by 20,000 UDI supporters, thanked him and other former members of the military junta for their “liberating military action” seventeen years earlier against the government of Salvador Allende. The UDI expressed its conviction that Pinochet would go down in history as one of Chile’s “great patriots,” and that the coup would be remembered forever as one of the military’s “most unequalled glories.” This letter, which was accompanied by public celebrations, was provocative. During the period of military rule (1973-1990) that the UDI was celebrating, approximately 3,000 people had been killed or “disappeared,” and tens of thousands more had been tortured or exiled. With the transition to democracy having occurred just six months earlier, the memories of this period were still raw. Moreover, the date chosen for the letter and celebrations could not have been more symbolic: it was on the same day in 1973 that the military had carried out its coup.

In the context of democracy, one might expect that a party with such obvious links to a former dictatorship would not have much of a political future. In contemporary Latin America, however, such a prediction would be wrong. The UDI not only went on to cross this study’s threshold for party-building success by winning 10 percent or more in 5

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<sup>1</sup> See “General (R) Gustavo Leigh Guzmán: ‘El Pronunciamiento Militar Fue Inevitable y Bien Hecho,’ ” *El Mercurio*, 11 September 1990; “General Pinochet Dijo que en Situación Similar al Año 73 Actuaría de la Misma Forma,” *El Mercurio*, 12 September 1990.

consecutive legislative elections, but by 2001 it had become the single most-voted-for party in Chile—a status that it has held in all subsequent legislative elections. The UDI was not unique. In fact, *all* of the cases of successful conservative party-building in Latin America after the onset of the third wave were also authoritarian successor parties, or parties founded by high-level incumbents of former dictatorships that continue to operate after a transition to democracy (see Table 2.1). While new conservative parties with relatively good democratic credentials, such as Guatemala’s PAN, Argentina’s UCEDE, Panama’s MOLIRENA and Peru’s Liberty Movement, all failed to take root, several parties with close connections to recent dictatorships, such as El Salvador’s ARENA, Chile’s UDI and RN, Brazil’s PFL and Bolivia’s ADN, became electorally significant and enduring political actors.

What explains the surprising success of so many conservative parties with deep roots in authoritarian regimes, and the simultaneous failure of conservative parties with better democratic credentials? In this chapter, I attempt to answer this question by developing a theory of what I call *authoritarian inheritance*. Rather than dooming a new party’s chances, I argue that dictatorial origins can sometimes be the key to democratic success. While it is true that many voters will be turned off by such a genealogy, this potential liability can sometimes be offset by the valuable assets that these parties inherit from their authoritarian forebears. Five forms of authoritarian inheritance are particularly important: (1) party brand, (2) territorial organization, (3) sources of cohesion, (4) clientelistic networks and (5) business connections. While these resources would be useful for any new party,<sup>2</sup> I argue that they are

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<sup>2</sup> Authoritarian successor parties are not an exclusively conservative phenomenon. As I explain below, the categories of “authoritarian successor party” and “conservative party” are orthogonal. Sometimes these categories overlap empirically, as in the cases of the UDI and ARENA. In many cases, however, they do not. Thus, it is possible to have conservative parties that are not authoritarian successor parties (e.g., PAN, UCEDE), just as it is possible to have authoritarian successor parties that are not conservative parties. The most obvious examples of authoritarian successor parties that are not conservative parties are ex-communist

especially valuable for conservative parties, helping them to overcome the unique challenges that such parties face as a result of their small core constituencies.

In this chapter, I present the theory of authoritarian inheritance, before illustrating it in the empirical chapters that follow. To this end, I divide the chapter into four sections. In the first section, I examine the difficulties of conservative party-building, and argue that the main challenge that conservative parties face is the construction of a multiclass electoral coalition. While several strategies can be employed to overcome this challenge, I argue that each one poses significant difficulties for conservative parties, especially in the contemporary period with the rise of “party substitutes” (Hale 2006). In the second section, I discuss the concept of authoritarian successor parties, and argue that such parties are highly relevant to the party-building literature. In the third section, I present my theory of authoritarian inheritance, and demonstrate how resources inherited from a previous dictatorship can be a key determinant of successful conservative party-building. In the final section, I take a step back and ask why conservative authoritarian successor parties formed in some countries in Latin America during the third wave but not others. I argue that this was a product of the relative balance between authoritarian inheritance and what I call “authoritarian baggage,” the negative version of authoritarian inheritance. I argue that this balance was the result of three antecedent conditions related to the previous authoritarian regime: (1) the nature of the regime, (2) the performance of the regime and (3) the level of threat before or after the regime.

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parties in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In Latin America, two prominent examples are Panama’s Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and Nicaragua’s Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Both parties grew out of left-leaning dictatorships, and both retained this orientation under democracy.

## Challenges of Conservative Party-Building

Party-building is always difficult, and most new parties end in failure.<sup>3</sup> The builders of new conservative parties, however, face an especially daunting task—one that has grown only more daunting since the onset of the third wave. The main challenge for conservative parties is to put together a multiclass electoral coalition.<sup>4</sup> To be sure, all parties face this challenge to some degree. For example, European socialist parties in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries possessed a large core constituency—the industrial working class—yet found that they could not win elections unless they extended their appeal to other parts of the electorate (Przeworski 1985). Conservative parties face the same challenge, but in acute form, given the small size of their upper-class core constituency. Michels (1962 [1915]: 46) noted this challenge for conservative parties a century ago, writing that a party of elites that “should appeal only to the members of its own class and to those of identical economic interests, would not win a single seat, would not send a single representative to parliament.” Economic elites, by definition, constitute a small percentage of the population; as such, to be electorally successful, conservative parties must go beyond their core constituency and attract the votes of non-elite members of society, too. In Michels’ (1962 [1915]: 46) words: “With democratic mien he [the conservative leader] must descend into the electoral arena, must hail the farmers and agricultural laborers as professional colleagues, and must seek to convince them that their economic and social interests are identical with his own.”

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<sup>3</sup> In their compilation of all new parties formed in Latin America between 1978 and 2005 that won at least one percent of the vote in a national legislative election, Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck (n.d.) counted 307 parties. Of those 307 new parties, and employing an operationalization of successful party-building similar to the one that I use in this study, they counted only 11 cases of success.

<sup>4</sup> See Gibson (1996: 7-18).



The existence of successful conservative parties in Latin America and beyond demonstrates that it is not impossible to overcome the challenge of building a multiclass coalition. It is clear, though, that the logic of coalition-building for conservative parties necessarily differs from that of other parties. A socialist party, for example, may not be able to win elections with the votes of the industrial working class alone. Yet, it can still try to put together a coalition of workers, peasants, small businesspeople and other subaltern groups through a class-oriented appeal, broadly understood, in which the “the people” or “the masses” are pitted against “the oligarchy” or “the elite.”<sup>5</sup> In contrast, a conservative party can never hope to win elections through such a class-based appeal. The extremely small size of its upper-class core constituency means that it must win the vast majority of its votes from other social strata—strata whose economic interests are likely to be very different from those of its core constituency. For this reason, conservative parties must try to downplay class as a politically salient cleavage and focus their electoral appeal on other kinds of issues and identities. Ultimately, the small size of conservative parties’ core constituency results in a peculiar logic of electoral mobilization. As Gibson (1992: 20) puts it: “[T]he Left seeks to slice society horizontally; conservative movements seek to slice it vertically.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For more on how leftist parties can make broad class-based, see Przeworski (1985: 26-27).

<sup>6</sup> In other words, conservative parties must become masters of what Riker (1986) called “heresthetics.” According to Riker (1986), whenever the distribution of preferences of the electorate on a particular dimension favors one party over another, it is in the interest of the losing party to try and restructure the political debate by introducing a new dimension. If enough voters can be convinced to vote on the basis the new dimension, and if the previously losing party positions itself close to the majority view on the new dimension, it can go from being an electoral loser to being an electoral winner. Riker (1986: 66, 1) called this strategy “increasing dimensionality,” and he described it as “the fundamental heresthetical device.” This strategy is highly relevant for conservative parties. If people vote on the basis of the class dimension alone, conservative parties will always lose. However, if new dimension can be added to the debate—for example, non-class identities, issues of personal morality, or violent crime—there is no reason why conservative parties cannot thrive at the polls.

There are three major strategies that conservative parties can employ in order to slice society vertically and thereby put together a multiclass electoral coalition: clientelism, crosscutting issues and identities, and valence issues. In the first strategy, *clientelism*, parties try to win votes by giving individuals direct material benefits in exchange for their support.<sup>7</sup> Historically, some European conservative parties have employed this strategy to great effect (Shefter 1994: 35-36). Instead of dividing society on the basis of class, clientelism divides voters into “ins” and “outs,” with only the former receiving material benefits. In the second strategy, parties try to win votes through *crosscutting issues and identities*. In this strategy, parties emphasize non-class identities, such as religion, race and region, or issues of personal morality, such as abortion and gay rights.<sup>8</sup> Christian Democratic parties, for example, which play the role of conservative parties in some European countries, have successfully built mass followings on the basis of religion.<sup>9</sup> Instead of dividing society along class lines, this strategy divides it according to identities that transcend class, such as Christian and non-Christian, local and outsider, or moral and immoral. Finally, in the third strategy, conservative parties can emphasize *valence issues*. These are issues that virtually all voters already consider important, such as corruption, economic growth, public security and

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<sup>7</sup> For discussions of clientelism as a voter-party linkage strategy, see Kitschelt (2000) and Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007).

<sup>8</sup> According to Gibson (1992: 20), “Catholics, Bavarians, Correntinos, southerners, and the nation are some of the collective identities counterposed by conservative movements to the class-based appeals of the Left.” For a journalistic account of how the strategy of emphasizing issues of personal morality over the dimension of class has been effectively employed by the Republican Party in the United States, see Frank (2004).

<sup>9</sup> On Christian Democratic parties in Europe, see Kalyvas (1996). The British Conservative Party is another example of a conservative party that successfully emphasized crosscutting identities in order to win a large percentage of non-elite votes. According to McKenzie and Silver (1968: 48), the party did this by downplaying class and emphasizing “the sense of community, nationalism, and pride in Britain’s imperial role.” According to Ziblatt (forthcoming), the British Conservatives also successfully religious appeals.

national defense.<sup>10</sup> Valence issues cast an even wider net than crosscutting identities like religion, potentially encompassing the whole of society: everyone is in favor of economic growth and national defense and everyone is against corruption and violent crime. As such, winning votes on the basis of valence issues is not a matter of staking out a unique position on a spectrum of alternatives that is attractive to a sufficiently large portion of the electorate. Instead, the key to employing the valence issue strategy is to make the case, credibly, that one's party is uniquely capable of delivering the universally valued good.

These strategies—either alone or in combination—can, and have been, effectively employed by conservative parties to construct multiclass electoral coalitions. Nevertheless, doing so poses significant challenges, particularly for new conservative parties. The first challenge is to construct a well-known and attractive *party brand*.<sup>11</sup> According to Lupu's (2013, forthcoming) influential formulation, a party's brand is the image of it that voters develop by observing its behavior over time. Parties with strong brands come to stand for something in the eyes of voters. To the extent that they feel a sense of “comparative fit” between a party's brand and their own views, voters will become partisans and will consistently turn out to vote for it. For Lupu (2013, forthcoming), a party's brand is defined by its location on some sort of continuum, particularly the left-right continuum.<sup>12</sup> Based on this understanding, he argues that two factors are essential for maintaining a strong brand: “inter-party differentiation” and “intra-party consistency.” In other words, a party's brand is

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<sup>10</sup> Valence issues thus differ from “position issues,” which “involve advocacy of government actions from a set of alternatives over which a distribution of voter preferences is defined” (Stokes 1963: 373).

<sup>11</sup> For an earlier discussion of the importance of brand, territorial organization and sources of cohesion, see Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck (n.d.).

<sup>12</sup> Thus, Lupu (2013, forthcoming) essentially defines party brand in terms of what Stokes (1963) calls “position issues.”

strong insofar as it is different from other parties' brands and consistent with its own principles. In this study, I adopt a broader conception of brand than the one used by Lupu, in that I allow for the possibility of a brand defined in terms of valence issues.<sup>13</sup> Thus, a party can build a strong brand not only by staking out a position on a policy or ideological continuum, but also by presenting itself as the champion of valence issues such as economic growth, low inflation, national defense and "law and order"—issues that almost all voters care about and to which other parties are also committed, at least nominally.

In recent years, scholars have attempted to explain the phenomenon of "brand dilution" and have highlighted its role in party system collapse.<sup>14</sup> However, before a new party can even begin to think about the issue of dilution, it must first *develop* a brand. Brand development involves the formation of brand content and the diffusion of that content among the electorate. In other words, the party must craft a message that voters find attractive and make sure that they know about it. Brand development is difficult for all new parties, since it requires standing out in an electoral marketplace already saturated by more established parties and/or other new parties similarly vying for voters' attention. For new conservative parties, however, the task is especially difficult. The reason is that conservative parties are more likely to campaign on valence issues than, for example, leftist parties. And the effectiveness of campaigning on valence issues, as discussed above, stands or falls on the credibility of the messenger. It is one thing to promise low inflation or to get tough on crime; however, if voters doubt that the party is truly capable of delivering on such promises, the message is likely to fall flat. But if a party has never governed before, it will be difficult

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<sup>13</sup> In this respect, my understanding of party brand is closer to what Hale (2006: 12) calls "ideational capital," which is a party's "brand image" and involves "the cultivation of a *reputation* for standing for [certain] principles."

<sup>14</sup> See Lupu (2013, forthcoming) and Roberts (n.d.).

to allay such doubts and make the case, convincingly, that it is truly the best vehicle for delivering the universally valued good. The upshot is that while brand development poses a challenge for all new parties, it is especially challenging for new conservative parties.

The second challenge is to build a *territorial organization*. Parties rarely survive in voters' minds alone. Instead, most successful parties have an organized presence on the ground, whether in the form of formal branch structures, informal patronage-based machines, or social movements.<sup>15</sup> Territorial organization is an essential component of successful party-building, for several reasons. First, a strong on-the-ground presence is crucial for maintaining party visibility between elections and mobilizing voters on election day. Having grassroots networks of party activists who can disseminate the party's message,<sup>16</sup> knock on doors, drive voters to the polls, and so on, is a crucial determinant of electoral success. Second, as Van Dyck (2013) has argued, a strong territorial organization can help new parties to survive early crises. Because the rank-and-file cadres who make up party organizations are often ideologically committed activists, they are more prone to "stick it out" in the face of disappointing electoral setbacks.<sup>17</sup> Third, a strong territorial organization can help new parties to win subnational office, which can contribute to their future success at the national level by allowing them to demonstrate a capacity to govern.<sup>18</sup> This is especially important for conservative parties, given that they often emphasize valence issues—and that the effectiveness of campaigning on valence issues largely depends on the

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<sup>15</sup> For classic discussions of different forms of party organization, see Duverger (1964) and Panebianco (1988).

<sup>16</sup> According to Samuels and Zucco (forthcoming), a strong territorial organization can also help to diffuse the party's brand.

<sup>17</sup> See also Cyr (2012) and Greene (n.d.).

<sup>18</sup> On the importance of subnational office-holding for party-building, see Van Cott (2005) and Holland (n.d.).

credibility of the messenger. Finally, territorial organization is crucial for the employment of clientelism. Identifying, monitoring and channeling material awards to supporters are all complicated tasks, and they require the construction of a significant organization to be carried out effectively. As Kitschelt (2000: 849) explains: “[T]he complexity of material resource flows only through heavy investments in administrative infrastructure of multilevel political machines that reach from the summits of national politics down to the municipal level.”<sup>19</sup> Again, this is particularly important for conservative parties, since clientelism is one of the key strategies that they can use in order to construct a multiclass electoral coalition.

Building a territorial organization is difficult for all new parties, but it is especially difficult for new conservative parties. The main reason is that, as parties with an elite core constituency, conservative parties usually cannot draw on and “retrofit” the kinds of preexisting, mass-based mobilizing structures that have often been used by other parties, such as labor unions or indigenous movements.<sup>20</sup> The historical exceptions have been religious or church-based organizations, which played a key role in the development of Christian Democratic (Kalyvas 1996) and conservative parties (Ziblatt, forthcoming) in much of Europe. Even these, however, were generally not available to conservative party-builders in contemporary Latin America, since they were often attached to Christian Democratic parties—which, unlike their European counterparts, have often had a center-left orientation and a non-elite core constituency.<sup>21</sup> While it might seem that conservative parties

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<sup>19</sup> See also Levitsky (2003); Hale (2006); and Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007).

<sup>20</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, there is a large literature on the role of mobilizing structures. For some notable recent contributions, see Kalyvas (1996), Van Cott (2005), LeBas (2011), Art (2011), Ziblatt (forthcoming) and Barndt (forthcoming). For classic arguments on this subject, see Duverger (1964) and Shefter (1994).

<sup>21</sup> On Christian Democratic parties in Latin America, see Mainwaring and Scully (2003). For a recent analysis of the virtual absence of new Catholic parties in Latin America, see Mantilla (2011).

would at least have access to abundant funds that they could use to hire an army of party workers, conservative parties in Latin America have, in fact, traditionally had a hard time winning the backing of the single most important potential source of financial resources: the private sector. Indeed, business in Latin America has rarely invested in conservative party-building, opting instead to promote its interest through alternative means, such as lobbying or outright corruption.<sup>22</sup> This is in contrast to conservative parties in other parts of the world, which, according to Duverger (1964: xxxiv), are almost always backed by “big business.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, in addition to having limited access to the kinds of mobilizing structures available to other parties, conservative parties in Latin America have also tended to lack strong allies among the one group with whom they ought to have an advantage.<sup>24</sup>

The final challenge of conservative party-building is to find a *source of party cohesion*. Party cohesion refers to the propensity of party leaders and core supporters to hang together—especially in the face of crisis. Party cohesion is the Achilles’ heel of new parties. While it may be possible for a new party, with time and effort, to build a popular and well-known brand and construct a robust territorial organization, it will almost certainly fail if party leaders and members of its core constituency defect during the start-up phase. Of the four cases that I examine in this study, two collapsed in the wake of devastating schisms: Argentina’s UCEDE in the early 1990s and Guatemala’s PAN in the late 1990s and early

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<sup>22</sup> See Gibson (1996: 216-220) and Schneider (2010).

<sup>23</sup> Thus, Duverger (1964: xxxiv) describes “the part played in the birth of the Canadian Conservative Party in 1854 by the Bank of Montreal, the Grand Trunk Railway, and by Montreal ‘big business’ generally. Similar influences could no doubt be discovered at work in the formation of almost all right-wing parties.”

<sup>24</sup> According to Barndt (forthcoming), business in some Latin American countries has pioneered a new model of party-building. Rather than backing existing conservative parties, he demonstrates that some businesses have opted to form their own parties from scratch. So far, however, it appears that these business-sponsored parties are little more than personalistic vehicles and, as such, their futures remain highly uncertain.

2000s. While maintaining cohesion is a challenge for all new parties,<sup>25</sup> it is especially challenging for new conservative parties. Given the small size of their core constituency, many conservative party leaders are likely to conclude that constructing a winning coalition is simply too daunting a task and abandon the party-building effort. Some supporters of the party are likely to reach the same conclusion, opting for alternative means of interest representation. If the leaders and supporters of conservative parties choose to abandon the party during the start-up phase, the party will be stillborn. To avoid this outcome, parties therefore need some source of cohesion. As one interviewee from the UCEDE put it while describing his party's schisms: "We lacked Poxipol to unite us," in reference to an Argentine brand of glue.<sup>26</sup> One of the major challenges of party-building, then, is to find something to glue them together. Potential sources of cohesion include patronage, ethnicity, ideology or a sense of mission or "*mística*."<sup>27</sup> To be clear, I am *not* arguing that parties need cohesion to avoid schisms. That would be tautological. I *am* arguing that parties need some *source* of cohesion in order to avoid this fate. In short, they need some kind of "Poxipol."

Building a popular and well-known brand, constructing a robust territorial organization and maintaining party cohesion—all with the ultimate goal of constructing a multiclass electoral coalition—has always posed a major challenge for conservative parties. There is good reason to believe, however, that the challenge is especially difficult in contemporary Latin America, for two reasons. The first is the rise of new forms of what

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<sup>25</sup> In Peru, for example, the electorally strong United Left (IU) collapsed after suffering a devastating party schism in 1989. On the rise and fall of the IU, see Roberts (1998) and Van Dyck (2013).

<sup>26</sup> Author's interview with national UCEDE leader, 19 April 2012.

<sup>27</sup> On potential sources of cohesion, see Levitsky and Way (2012). They argue, against other authors, that patronage is unlikely to be an effective source of party cohesion.



Hale (2006) calls “party substitutes.”<sup>28</sup> One particularly important form of party substitute is television.<sup>29</sup> As Mainwaring and Zoco (2007: 167) have noted, television has made party-building much less necessary for ambitious politicians than in the past:

Through television, a candidate can reach the public instantaneously and without building an organization. Building a party is an arduous task with an uncertain electoral payoff. For the history of liberal democracy until the 1980s, the answer to John Aldrich’s...question, *Why Parties?* was obvious to political candidates: parties provided a huge, almost indispensable electoral advantage. In many post-1978 competitive regimes, this advantage is marginal or non-existent.

One important consequence of this party substitute has been the rise of right-wing “neopopulists,” such as Brazil’s Fernando Collor de Mello and Peru’s Alberto Fujimori, who combined traditional forms of populist mobilization and neoliberal economics.<sup>30</sup> These “telepopulists” (Boas 2005) lacked real parties, but still managed to get elected through media-based appeals and, once in office, to carry out many of the policies favored by the new right. The availability of this form of party substitute has been harmful to conservative party-building efforts in two ways. First, it has reduced incentives to engage in organization-building.<sup>31</sup> Second, it has made it more difficult to maintain party cohesion by increasing the temptation to defect. As the collapse of Peru’s Liberty Movement after Fujimori’s victory

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<sup>28</sup> According to Aldrich’s (1995) classic argument, it is nearly inevitable that parties will emerge under democracy. This is because parties are useful for mobilizing voters and coordinating parliamentary blocs and, as such, rational politicians can be expected to “turn to parties” (Aldrich 1995: 28). Yet, as Hale (2006) points out, parties are not the only means of achieving these goals; there are also party substitutes. In postcommunist Russia, for example, “political machines of provincial governors” and “politicized financial-industrial groups” have served as party substitutes for many politicians; in the United States, “party substitutes have historically included everything from immigrant societies and agricultural cooperatives to more modern advocacy groups such as the powerful National Rifle Association and personal vote organizations” (Hale 2006: 19).

<sup>29</sup> For other forms of party substitute in contemporary Latin America, see Levitsky and Zavaleta (n.d.).

<sup>30</sup> See Roberts (1995) and Weyland (1996). It is true that in 1990, Fujimori did not run as a conservative candidate, and he was not the preferred candidate of elites or the media in this election (Mario Vargas Llosa had a clear media advantage). Once in office, though, Fujimori introduced “neoliberalism by surprise” (Stokes 2001), and in subsequent elections he campaigned as a right-wing “telepopulist” to great effect (Boas 2005).

<sup>31</sup> See Van Dyck (2013).

illustrates, it is difficult to convince party leaders and supporters to stick with a party when a new president—regardless of his unconventional route to power or other undesirable qualities—is offering to implement the party’s program now.<sup>32</sup>

The second reason that conservative party-building has been especially difficult in contemporary Latin America stems from what we might call the “neoliberalization” of non-conservative parties.<sup>33</sup> In the 1980s and early 1990s, governments throughout Latin America responded to depression-like conditions by carrying out deep economic reforms. These reforms generally hewed closely to the market-oriented policies advocated by the new right. Yet, remarkably, these reforms were usually not carried out by conservative parties themselves (Roberts, n.d.). In some cases, they were carried out by right-wing neopopulists. In other cases, they were carried out by non-conservative parties traditionally associated with more statist economic positions, but that once in office made sharp policy shifts and carried out “neoliberalism by surprise” (Stokes 2001). Examples include Argentina’s Peronists (PJ) under Carlos Menem, Venezuela’s Democratic Action (AD) under Carlos Andrés Pérez, and Bolivia’s Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) under Víctor Paz Estenssoro and Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. For conservative party leaders and their core supporters, backing the reformist efforts of these non-conservative parties provided an alternative and more immediate way of realizing their policy objectives. One important leader of Argentina’s UCEDE captured well the decision that conservative party-builders faced when

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<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, left-wing populism may not have the same negative effects on party-building. According to Roberts (2006b), leftist populists sometimes invest in parties even though they are not necessary to win elections. Instead, they use parties as “instrument[s] to push through social reforms and to wage conflict in extraelectoral spheres of contestation” against “entrenched power structures” (Roberts 2006b: 128-129).

<sup>33</sup> Gibson (1996: 228-229) uses the term “conservatization of populism” to describe a similar phenomenon.

she asserted: “Either we popularize a liberal party or we liberalize a populist party.”<sup>34</sup> While serious efforts were made during the 1980s to popularize the liberal UCEDE, after Menem came to power many leaders and supporters opted for the latter option of liberalizing a populist party and threw their support to Menem’s version of the PJ. In the process, they turned their backs on the UCEDE, thereby condemning the new party to failure.

To recap, in this section I have argued that the fundamental challenge of conservative party-building is the construction of a multiclass electoral coalition. Given the nature and small size of their core constituencies, conservative parties cannot hope to forge such a coalition through a class-based appeal. Instead, they must attract voters through alternative means, such as clientelism, crosscutting identities and valence issues. Employing these strategies effectively, in turn, requires that conservative parties build popular and well-known brands, construct robust territorial organizations and maintain party cohesion, especially during the early years of the party’s existence. These tasks have always posed a special challenge for new conservative parties; after the onset of the third wave, however, the challenge arguably became greater than ever, given the rise of party substitutes and the “neoliberalization” of non-conservative parties. It is no wonder, then, that so many efforts at conservative party-building in Latin America in recent decades ended in failure. Nevertheless, some new conservative parties managed to buck the trend and become electorally significant and enduring political actors. What allowed these parties to succeed while so many of their counterparts failed? One clue can be found in an unusual characteristic that all of the successful cases shared: they had deep roots in former

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<sup>34</sup> Adelina Dalesio de Viola, quoted in Gibson (1996: 206).

dictatorships. In other words, in addition to being conservative parties, they were authoritarian successor parties—a concept that I discuss in the following section.

### Authoritarian Successor Parties

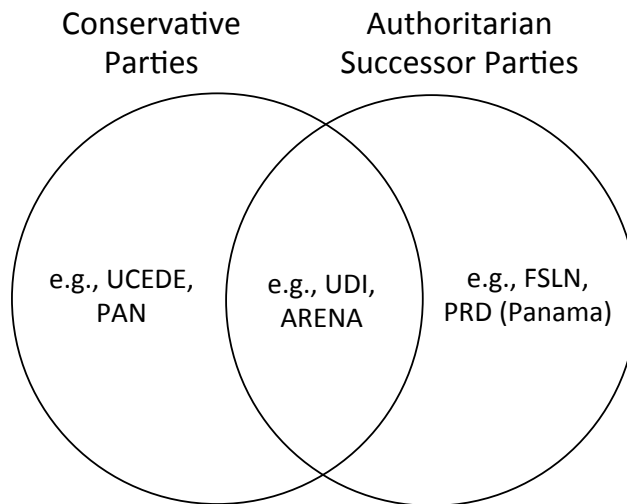
The third wave transformed Latin America from a region that was almost uniformly authoritarian to one that was almost uniformly democratic. Beginning in 1978, authoritarian regimes began to fall throughout the region, and by 2000, the only remaining case of full-blown dictatorship was Cuba. Yet, while authoritarian incumbents were forced from office nearly everywhere, they did not necessarily disappear from the political scene. Instead, in many countries former authoritarian incumbents created political parties—and in several cases, these parties went on to enjoy considerable success in the new democratic regime. Haggard and Kaufman (1995) were perhaps the first to note the existence of parties of this kind in Latin America, dubbing them “continuist parties.”<sup>35</sup> In an important paper on the “conservative party deficit” in Latin America a little over a decade later, Roberts (2006a) drew further attention to such parties and made an astute observation. While most conservative parties in the region were weak, he noted that there were a handful of notable exceptions—and that all of these parties shared a surprising characteristic: “The most notable exceptions were in countries with conservative parties built on the foundations of repressive state institutions” (Roberts 2006a: 2). In other words, the successful conservative

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<sup>35</sup> As Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 126-133) explain: “Though these parties did not for the most part support an actual continuation of military rule, we have called them ‘continuist’ since they provided support for the preferences of outgoing rulers with respect to both policies and institutional arrangements.” For another important contribution that deals with a similar topic, see Power (2000).

parties all “had close ties to authoritarian rulers in its recent past” (Roberts 2006a: 8). In a later paper, Roberts (2012) would label these “authoritarian successor parties.”

Figure 2.1. Conservative Parties and Authoritarian Successor Parties



In this study, I adopt the term “authoritarian successor parties” and define them as *parties founded by high-level incumbents of former dictatorships that continue to operate after a transition to democracy*. It should be noted at the outset that conservative parties and authoritarian successor parties are analytically distinct concepts (see Figure 2.1). Conservative parties, as explained in Chapter 1, are defined in terms of their upper-class core constituency. Authoritarian successor parties, in contrast, are defined in terms of their founders’ relationship to past dictatorships. In this study, I examine several instances in which these two analytically distinct concepts overlap empirically (e.g., UDI, ARENA). The two concepts are orthogonal, however, and as such need not overlap. Thus, it is possible to have a conservative party that is not an authoritarian successor party (e.g., PAN, UCEDE), just as it is possible to have an authoritarian successor party that is not a conservative party (e.g., ex-

communist parties in eastern Europe). In fact, two of the most successful new parties in Latin America since the onset of the third wave are left-leaning authoritarian successor parties: Panama's Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The goal of this section is to flesh out the concept of authoritarian successor parties and, to this end, I draw on some examples of non-conservative authoritarian successor parties. In the concluding chapter, I also discuss authoritarian successor parties in general when considering the broader implications of my theory of authoritarian inheritance. In the rest of the study, however, I do not discuss non-conservative authoritarian successor parties. While important in their own right, they are not directly related to the puzzle that I seek to explain in these pages—that is, variation in conservative party-building—and, as such, they fall outside the bounds of this study.

This definition has two main parts. First, authoritarian successor parties operate in *democratic regimes*. By specifying this, the definition excludes ruling parties in the context of authoritarian regimes, even if the regimes in question hold somewhat competitive elections, as in the case of “electoral authoritarianism” (Schedler 2006) or “competitive authoritarianism” (Levitsky and Way 2010). To be sure, many authoritarian successor parties begin their lives as authoritarian ruling parties (e.g., Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI], Taiwan's Kuomintang [KMT]). However, after democratization, these parties—if they manage to survive the transition—are transformed into authoritarian successor parties. To illustrate, we can say that Mexico's PRI was an authoritarian ruling party until 2000. After the transition to democracy in 2000, the PRI became an authoritarian successor party. An important implication of this part of the definition is that in order to win votes, authoritarian successor parties cannot rely on the “menu of manipulation” (Schedler 2002)

used by electoral authoritarian regimes, such as coercion, fraud or massive abuse of state resources.<sup>36</sup> Authoritarian successor parties can, and often do, enjoy success under democracy. To do so, however, they must abide by the democratic rules of the game.

Second, the founders of authoritarian successor parties are *high-level incumbents* of the old regime, such as heads of state, important ministers or key members of the security apparatus. In dictatorships that survive for long periods, much of the population is often implicated in the regime in some way; in order to prevent the concept from being stretched to the point of meaninglessness, the definition thus excludes individuals who held low-level positions in the old regime. Examples of parties that satisfy the criteria for inclusion are Bolivia's Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN), which was founded by a former dictator (Hugo Banzer); Chile's Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and National Renewal (RN), among whose founders were prominent ministers of the Pinochet regime (e.g., Sergio Fernández, Sergio Onofre Jarpa); and El Salvador's Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), which was founded by a high-level official in the military regime's security apparatus (Roberto D'Aubuisson). In contrast, a party like Guatemala's National Advancement Party (PAN) would not be considered an authoritarian successor party. It is true that its founder, Álvaro Arzú, had been the director of the Guatemalan Tourism

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<sup>36</sup> A partial exception may occur when pockets of "subnational authoritarianism" persist after national-level transitions to democracy. As scholars such as Gibson (2012) have noted, it is not uncommon for democratic regimes at the national level to coexist with authoritarian rule in some subnational units. In cases where former authoritarian ruling parties lose power nationally in a transition to democracy but retain power at the provincial level, they may continue to employ non-democratic methods in order to reproduce themselves subnationally—and from there to lay the groundwork for a possible national comeback. This is arguably what occurred in the case of Mexico's PRI, which lost the presidency in 2000, but held onto power in most states and successfully reinvented itself as "the party of the governors" (Gibson 2012: 119). According to Flores-Macías (2013a: 137), control of the states, many of which were "enclaves of authoritarian practices including clientelism, corruption, censorship, and a personality cult around the governor reminiscent of patrimonial times," was crucial for the PRI's victory in the 2012 presidential election. Even in cases like the PRI, however, which continue to employ authoritarian practices in some states or provinces, the ability of the former ruling party to tilt the playing field in its favor is drastically reduced by its loss of control of the national state apparatus.

Institute (INGUAT), a state agency, for three years during military rule. Yet this position did not make him a significant player in Guatemala's military regime and, as such, my definition excludes the PAN from the category of authoritarian successor party.

Finally, I add a caveat: if a party engages in protracted opposition to a country's authoritarian regime, it is not considered an authoritarian successor party, even if it was originally founded by high-level authoritarian incumbents. Parties that engage in this sort of protracted opposition are denied access to state resources and often suffer violent persecution, regardless of the posts their founders may have held at one time in the regime. Spending their formative years under such conditions of adversity gives such parties a peculiar set of characteristics,<sup>37</sup> resulting in a very different beast than the sorts of party that I examine in this study. For this reason, I exclude such parties from the definition of authoritarian successor parties. Based on this caveat, a party like Mexico's Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD)<sup>38</sup> would not be considered an authoritarian successor party. Although some of the PRD's founders were high-level authoritarian incumbents—notably Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, a former PRI senator and governor, as well as the son of PRI icon Lázaro Cárdenas—the party is nevertheless excluded because of its prominent and sustained role in Mexico's pro-democracy struggle in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Brazil's Liberal Front Party (PFL), however, would still be considered an authoritarian successor party. While it is true that the PFL's founders—most of whom were high-level authoritarian incumbents—defected from the military regime, this occurred in the regime's final days.

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<sup>37</sup> See Greene (n.d.) and Van Dyck (2013).

<sup>38</sup> The Mexican Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) should not be confused with the Panamanian Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD). While the Mexican PRD does not meet the criteria to be scored as an authoritarian successor party, the Panamanian PRD *is* a case of an authoritarian successor party.



The PFL did not suffer years of persecution like Mexico's PRD, nor did it make a clean break with its past. Indeed, the PFL was arguably "the true heir of the [ruling party of Brazil's military regime]" (Power 2000: 80).

There are two main subtypes of authoritarian successor party. The first and most obvious are former authoritarian ruling parties. These are parties used by authoritarian regimes as instruments of rule,<sup>39</sup> but that, as discussed above, survive democratization and adapt to the new rules of the game. Examples include ex-communist parties in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, Mexico's PRI and Taiwan's KMT. The second are what I call "inside-out" parties. Like all authoritarian successor parties, these are parties founded by former high-level authoritarian incumbents. Unlike parties such as the PRI or the KMT, however, they were never official ruling parties in an authoritarian regime, either because the regime did not have a ruling party or because the party in question was the product of a split in the ruling party. The term "inside-out" denotes the unusual status of their founders: they used to hold positions of power, but were then displaced. It is only after losing their positions (or fearing an imminent loss) that they turn to party-building. Due to an unplanned transition to democracy or an internal regime shuffle, these former insiders suddenly find themselves on the outside and, in response, found parties in an attempt to regain power and influence.<sup>40</sup> Examples of such parties include Bolivia's ADN, which was formed by former dictator Hugo Banzer in 1979 after being overthrown in a palace coup the year before; Chile's UDI, which was formed in 1983 by former authoritarian incumbents

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<sup>39</sup> A large literature has examined why parties are useful tools for maintaining authoritarian rule. For a classic statement, see Geddes (1999). For a useful review of the literature on this topic, see Levitsky and Way (2012).

<sup>40</sup> Thus, these parties straddle the line between what Shefter (1994: 5) calls "internally mobilized parties," or parties "founded by politicians who...occupy leadership positions in the prevailing regime," and "externally mobilized parties," which are "established by leaders who do *not* occupy positions of power in the prevailing regime and who seek to bludgeon their way into the political system by mobilizing and organizing a mass constituency."

after being temporarily marginalized from the military regime as the result of a factional shuffle; and El Salvador's ARENA, which was formed in 1981 by the former deputy director of intelligence of the military regime after losing his position in a palace coup.

Why distinguish between these two subtypes? Analytically, the difference between them is not particularly significant. All authoritarian successor parties face some of the same challenges in their early years, whether they are former authoritarian ruling parties or “inside-out” parties. They all must grapple with the baggage that comes with having propped up a dictatorship that, in all likelihood, was opposed by much of the population, and they all must spend a period of time “in the wilderness” after the transition to democracy, licking their wounds and learning to win elections in a clean, non-coercive manner. Nevertheless, this is not an exercise in subtypes for subtypes' sake. While they might be similar in analytical terms, it is important to note the existence of both subtypes for *empirical* reasons. If scholars limit their attention to former authoritarian ruling parties—which, as discussed below, has so far been the norm—the result is a systematic undercounting of the number of authoritarian successor parties in Latin America and other parts of the world. If, as I argue in this study, authoritarian successor parties are highly relevant to both the party-building and regimes literatures, then it is important to grasp the true extent of the phenomenon, which can only be done by recognizing the different varieties in which it comes.

Authoritarian successor parties are a widespread phenomenon, and they have not escaped scholars' notice. This is particularly true for those working on the post-communist world, who have produced a substantial literature on the fates of former ruling parties after the fall of communism. Under headings such as “successor parties” (Grzymala-Busse 2002), “communist successor parties” (Bozóki and Ishiyama 2002), “hegemonic successor parties”

(Rizova 2008), “ex-communist parties” (Ishiyama 1997; Ziblatt 1998), “neocommunist parties” (Ishiyama 2008) and “post-communist parties” (Kitschelt et al. 1999), these scholars have attempted to explain how parties with roots in reviled former dictatorships could survive—indeed, even thrive—after a transition to democracy.<sup>41</sup> Scholars have also given some attention to former ruling parties of non-communist dictatorships, especially the highly successful KMT in Taiwan (Cheng 2006; Wong 2008; Slater and Wong 2013).<sup>42</sup> In the context of Latin America, a handful of works have also examined former authoritarian ruling parties, including Mexico’s PRI (Langston 2003; Estévez et al. 2008; Flores-Macías 2012) and Nicaragua’s Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) (Martí i Puig 2010). In an important forthcoming book, Ziblatt widens the historical scope of the literature by arguing that some conservative parties in late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe were also, in effect, authoritarian successor parties, or what he calls “old regime parties.”

These works have made a number of valuable contributions, highlighting the existence of authoritarian successor parties and examining the conditions under which such parties successfully adapted (or failed to adapt) to the post-transition environment. Nevertheless, the existing literature has three shortcomings, which I hope to help remedy through this study. First, as will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter, this literature has not been adequately incorporated into the literature on regimes. Since the third wave, scholars have drawn attention to the ways that democracy and dictatorship sometimes bleed into one another, through phenomena such as “hybrid regimes,” “authoritarian

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<sup>41</sup> For an important recent contribution, see Tavits (2013).

<sup>42</sup> For a thoughtful comparative examination of transitions from single-party rule in authoritarian regimes (as well as its democratic counterpart, dominant-party rule), see chapters in Friedman and Wong (2008).

enclaves” and “subnational authoritarianism.”<sup>43</sup> Yet, authoritarian successor parties, which are among the most common expressions of this “grey area,” have not figured prominently in this conversation. Second, the literature has focused almost exclusively on former authoritarian ruling parties,<sup>44</sup> which, as discussed above, has resulted in the systematic undercounting of authoritarian successor parties. By overlooking the existence of “inside-out” parties, the sheer extent of the phenomenon has not been sufficiently appreciated. Finally, this literature has not been adequately incorporated into the literature on party-building. This point is almost certainly related to the previous one, i.e., the fact that most work has focused on former authoritarian ruling parties. Because such parties are not truly “new” at the time of democratization, the main focus of the existing literature has been on “party adaptation,” or why some former authoritarian ruling parties adapt more successfully to democracy than others.<sup>45</sup> I find many of the arguments from this literature highly insightful and I draw on them in my own work, as with Grzymala-Busse’s (2002) concepts of “usable pasts” and “portable skills.” Nevertheless, because most existing literature on authoritarian successor parties has been framed in terms of existing parties’ adaptation to new regimes (the challenge of former ruling parties) rather than the construction of new parties (the challenge of “inside-out” parties), the implications of authoritarian successor parties for the party-building literature remains underappreciated. In this study, I attempt to remedy this problem. By developing my theory of authoritarian inheritance, I show how resources inherited from the old regime can be a crucial determinant of party-building.

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<sup>43</sup> On hybrid regimes, see Schedler (2006) and Levitsky and Way (2010); on authoritarian enclaves, see Valenzuela (1992), Garretón (2003) and Stepan (1988); and on subnational authoritarianism, see Gibson (2012).

<sup>44</sup> Exceptions include Haggard and Kaufman (1995); Roberts (2006a, 2012); and Ziblatt (forthcoming).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, Grzymala-Busse (2002), Cheng (2006), Rizova (2008), Wong (2008) and Martí i Puig (2010).

## A Theory of Authoritarian Inheritance

When one looks at the universe of conservative parties in Latin America formed since the onset of the third wave, a striking pattern emerges: all of the successful new conservative parties were also authoritarian successor parties. As illustrated in Table 2.1, while new conservative parties with relatively good democratic credentials, such as Guatemala's PAN, Argentina's UCEDE, Panama's MOLIRENA and Peru's Liberty Movement, failed to take root, a number of authoritarian successor parties, such as El Salvador's ARENA, Chile's UDI and RN, Brazil's PFL and Bolivia's ADN, went on to become enduring electoral successes. Although there was one case of an authoritarian successor party that failed (Brazil's PP),<sup>46</sup> there was not a single case of a non-authoritarian successor party that succeeded. This correlation is highly suggestive. It is also robust to adjustments to my operationalization of party-building. If one were to impose a more exacting standard—for example, raising the temporal threshold by one election—ADN would be eliminated, but it would still be true that all successful new conservative parties were authoritarian successor parties (UDI, RN, ARENA and PFL). If one were to impose a more permissive standard—for example, lowering the temporal threshold by one election—the PAN would be scored (just barely) a success. The general pattern, however, would

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<sup>46</sup> The genealogy of the Progressive Party (PP) is convoluted. The PP was founded in 1995 after a series of mergers among existing parties, and was initially known as the Brazilian Progressive Party (PPB). The most important of the parties that participated in the merger was the Social Democratic Party (PDS), the old authoritarian ruling party of the military regime (originally known as the National Renewal Alliance Party, or ARENA). According to Power (2000: 80), “[b]y reputation, the closest thing to a direct successor to the old ARENA/PDS party structure would be the new PPB, which as recently as 1993 called itself the PDS, and which still contains most of the diehard PDS luminaries of the 1980s and early 1990s.” One of its most important leaders, for example, is Paulo Maluf, who was the official candidate of the military regime in the 1985 presidential election. Because the PP was the result of a fusion of other parties, I consider it to be a new party. Because of its clear roots in the old regime, I score it as an authoritarian successor party.

remain intact: there would be five successful authoritarian successor parties (UDI, RN, ARENA, PFL and ADN) and one successful non-authoritarian successor party (PAN). In short, as Roberts (2006a) first observed, there is a strong and robust correlation between conservative party-building and the fact of being an authoritarian successor party.

Table 2.1: Authoritarian Successor Parties and Conservative Party-Building Success

Country	Name	Authoritarian Successor Party?	Outcome
Argentina	Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE)	No	Failure
Argentina	Action for the Republic	No <sup>47</sup>	Failure
Bolivia	Nationalist Democratic Action (ADN)	Yes	Success
Brazil	Liberal Front Party (PFL)	Yes	Success
Brazil	Progressive Party (PP)	Yes	Failure
Chile	Independent Democratic Union (UDI)	Yes	Success
Chile	National Renewal (RN)	Yes	Success
El Salvador	Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA)	Yes	Success
Guatemala	National Advancement Party (PAN)	No	Failure
Panama	Nationalist Republican Liberal Movement (MOLIRENA)	No	Failure
Peru	Liberty Movement	No	Failure

Why were all successful new conservative parties also authoritarian successor parties? Much of the reason, I argue, was authoritarian inheritance. New parties are not all created equal. Instead, they vary dramatically in terms of what Hale (2004: 996) calls “starting political capital,” or “the stock of assets they possess that might be translated into electoral

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<sup>47</sup> Action for the Republic was formed in 1997 by Domingo Cavallo, who served as minister of foreign affairs from 1989 to 1991 and minister of the economy from 1991 to 1996 during the Peronist government of Carlos Menem. Cavallo was among the most iconic of Menem’s ministers, and became closely associated with the economic policies of his government. It is also true that Cavallo briefly held positions in the 1976-1983 military regime, first as undersecretary of internal affairs for 16 days in 1981 and then as president of the Central Bank for 53 days in 1982 (Corrales 1997: 58). However, given that his tenure in both positions was extremely short and the fact that his political reputation was based almost entirely on his status as a star minister of the Menem government, I do not code Action for the Republic as an authoritarian successor party.

success.” Some parties are born with large endowments of such assets and can hit the ground running; others are born with few, if any, of these assets and thus must start from scratch.<sup>48</sup> The idea that, all else equal, parties with greater stocks of starting political capital would have a better chance of success than parties with less starting political capital is not surprising. What is perhaps more surprising is that this could be inherited from former dictatorships. I call this form of starting political capital authoritarian inheritance.

The argument is straightforward: just as Christian Democratic and socialist parties may inherit valuable resources from Catholic associations and labor unions, respectively, so too may authoritarian successor parties inherit valuable resources from authoritarian regimes. While such inheritance is potentially valuable for all new parties, it is particularly useful for conservative parties, since it can help them to overcome one of the main challenges of conservative party-building: the construction of a multiclass electoral coalition. As discussed above, conservative parties have several options for building multiclass coalitions, including clientelism, crosscutting identities and valence issues. Many new conservative parties collapse, however, before these strategies can be implemented effectively because their leaders and supporters defect before the necessary resources can be amassed, often in favor of party substitutes. Authoritarian successor parties may be spared this fate. They are often simply born with these resources and, as such, can skip much of the difficult start-up phase of party-building and hit the ground running. The resources they may inherit include the three key determinants of successful conservative party-building discussed earlier in the

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<sup>48</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, the idea that some parties are born with greater initial endowments than others is one of the major contributions of the literature on “mobilizing structures.” On mobilizing structures, see Kalyvas (1996), Van Cott (2005), LeBas (2011), Art (2011), Ziblatt (forthcoming) and Barndt (forthcoming).

chapter, as well as two additional resources: (1) party brand, (2) territorial organization, (3) sources of elite cohesion, (4) clientelistic networks and (5) business connections.

Party Brand. The first resource that authoritarian successor parties may inherit from dictatorships is a brand. The idea that a brand derived from a dictatorship could be popular is counterintuitive. Many authoritarian regimes in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s were highly repressive. They imprisoned, tortured and killed on a large scale, and were widely denounced as human rights violators. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that dictatorships sometimes enjoy substantial levels of popular support. This does not necessarily mean that they have the backing of the majority; they may, however, enjoy the support of a sizeable minority of the population. In Chile, for example, when citizens were given the opportunity in 1988 to vote in a relatively free and fair election on whether to extend Pinochet's dictatorial rule, 44 percent voted in favor. While it is usually difficult, for obvious reasons, to measure public opinion under authoritarian regimes, anecdotal evidence suggests that such regimes often enjoy significant support. Dictatorships that provide these valued goods to their citizens may end up developing a brand—in the case of Chile, *Pinochetismo*—that many find appealing.<sup>49</sup> This idea is closely related to what Grzymala-Busse (2002: 5), in her study of ex-communist parties in East Central Europe, called “usable pasts,” or “the historical record of party accomplishments to which the elites can point, and the public perceptions of this record.” If authoritarian successor parties can transfer these popular brands to themselves, they inherit a valuable resource. This form of authoritarian inheritance is particularly valuable for conservative parties. Conservative parties often campaign on

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<sup>49</sup> To be sure, many authoritarian regimes govern disastrously, as in the case of the 1976-1983 Argentine dictatorship. As I discuss in the next section, when authoritarian regimes perform poorly in office, they produce greater amounts of “authoritarian baggage.” This, in turn, makes it less likely that an authoritarian successor party will emerge; if it does, it makes it less likely that the party will succeed.



valence issues, arguing that they are uniquely capable of delivering universally valued goods, such as economic growth and “order.” If a party’s leaders have governed in the past—even if this occurred during a previous dictatorship—and actually managed to provide the valued goods, the party is more likely to be seen as credible when making such promises.<sup>50</sup>

There are different reasons why authoritarian regimes sometimes enjoy significant popular support. One is clientelism, with authoritarian regimes essentially buying popular support through materialistic payouts. Another is performance: if authoritarian regimes provide public goods that people value, such as economic growth or political stability, they may win the support of much of the population despite their repressive activities. These are likely to be especially prized by the population if an authoritarian regime is preceded or followed by (or both) a period of political and economic chaos. Consider the case of National Democratic Action (ADN). In Bolivia, the seven-year (1971-1978) dictatorship of Hugo Banzer was preceded *and* followed by high levels of instability. The year prior to Banzer’s rise to power was characterized by “an almost comic series of coups and countercoups,” while in the four years after his fall Bolivia had “seven military and two weak civilian governments” (Gamarra and Malloy 1995: 404, 409). When democracy finally took hold in 1982, the country suffered an extraordinary economic crisis under the new democratic government of Hernán Siles Zuazo, in which “growth rates were negative, real salaries dramatically deteriorated, and inflation reached 8,000 percent by 1985” (Conaghan et al. 1990: 17). The Banzer government, by contrast, was relatively successful: not only was the country politically stable for seven years under Banzer’s rule, but it also enjoyed an

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<sup>50</sup> This argument is related to Grzymala-Busse’s (2002: 5) argument that, in addition to benefiting from “usable pasts,” ex-communist parties—and, presumably, other authoritarian successor parties, too—can also sometimes benefit from “portable skills,” which she defines as “the expertise and administrative experiences gained in the previous regime.”

economic boom. This “extraordinary growth affecting the national economy...created popular support for the regime despites its antidemocratic activities” (Klein 2011: 231). After the disastrous Siles Zuazo government, Banzer’s record must have seemed especially impressive to many Bolivians. During its electoral campaigns in the 1980s, ADN openly capitalized on nostalgia for the Banzer dictatorship. In the context of economic and political chaos, the party’s slogan of “*Banzer vuelve*” (Banzer returns) was for many Bolivians “the rough equivalent of ‘Happy days are here again’ ” (Conaghan et al. 1990: 11).

More recently, some authoritarian successor parties seem to have inherited credibility on the issue of public security, one of the most important valence issues in contemporary Latin America. With violent crime skyrocketing in the region, calls for “*mano dura*”<sup>51</sup> have become increasingly common. Typical *mano dura* policies include the suspension of procedural rights, the use of the military for police work and the empowerment of the police to make arrests on limited evidence (Holland 2013). In theory, any party could advocate these policies; in practice, however, a party led by former authoritarian incumbents who showed no qualms about such practices in the past may be viewed as particularly credible. This factor appears to have benefited El Salvador’s ARENA. As Holland (2013) argues, the party has made effective use of its “death squad” origins in order to bolster its tough-on-crime image.<sup>52</sup> For example, it has emphasized the figure of Major Roberto D’Aubuisson, the revered founder of the party that one U.S. ambassador described as a “pathological killer.”<sup>53</sup> The message seems to be that ARENA can be trusted to take a no-holds-barred

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<sup>51</sup> The translates literally as “hard hand,” but a more accurate translation would be “tough on crime.”

<sup>52</sup> For more on ARENA’s successful use of the issues of crime and *mano dura*, see Uang (2009).

<sup>53</sup> Robert White, quoted in Paige (1997: 34).

approach to crime in the present, given its use of violence in the past.<sup>54</sup> In short, authoritarian successor parties are often able to inherit well-known and popular brands from former dictatorships. Many voters associate the regimes from which these parties emerged with valued goods like political stability, economic growth, public security and a sense of “order,” and thus choose to vote for the inheritors of these brands under democracy.

Territorial Organization. The second resource that authoritarian successor parties may inherit is territorial organization. As discussed in Chapter 1, parties that are able to build upon preexisting mobilizing structures have an advantage over parties that must build from scratch. If new parties can draw on and “retrofit” organizations initially designed for different purposes, they are spared much of the work that in other new parties can appear so daunting that it encourages leaders and supporters to defect. Authoritarian regimes are one potential source of mobilizing structures. While many authoritarian rulers prefer a demobilized population, they may still invest in grassroots organizations as instruments of control. While one might expect organizations initially designed for authoritarian repression to be of little use to a party in the context of democracy, in practice such organizations have demonstrated remarkable versatility. If an authoritarian successor party can inherit a territorial organization in this way, it is born with one of the key determinants of successful party-building—and one that conservative parties, in particular, often find elusive.

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<sup>54</sup> In Peru, the same issue appears to have benefited *Fujimorismo*, the authoritarian successor party that emerged from the competitive authoritarian regime (1990-2000) of Alberto Fujimori. As Levitsky (2013: 305) has noted, one of the core planks of *Fujimorismo* is its “national security ideology,” which “emphasize[s] the centrality of the state in ensuring order and public security.” In addition, *Fujimoristas* “advocate a hard line against subversion” and “deeply distrust human rights advocacy, which they view as soft on terrorism” (Levitsky 2013: 305). While this national security ideology is rooted in the past struggle against the Shining Path guerrillas, it is essentially a recipe for *mano dura*. Presently, *Fujimorismo* probably would not qualify as a conservative party, given many elites’ aversion to the party. Nevertheless, it is a clear illustration of how authoritarian successor parties may inherit credibility on the issue of public security from past authoritarian regimes.

The clearest illustration of a party that benefited from this form of authoritarian inheritance is ARENA. In El Salvador, the country's previous military regime had constructed a vast paramilitary network known as the Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN), which the authorities used for spying, voter mobilization in unfair elections and "death squad" killings. ORDEN had tens of thousands of members and was present in every corner of the national territory, down to the smallest village. After it was dissolved in the wake of a 1979 palace coup, ARENA founder Roberto D'Aubuisson saw an opportunity. According to ARENA founders, D'Aubuisson's "obsession" was to reorganize ORDEN and incorporate it into his new party-building effort.<sup>55</sup> He succeeded in this effort, and "ORDEN [became] the organizational core of the new party" (Stanley 1996: 232). The inheritance of this massive territorial organization was of tremendous value for the new party, since it meant that "from the beginning ARENA had activists in the entire country, both in urban and rural areas" (Artiga 2001: 140). One reporter covering ARENA's debut election commented with surprise that, despite being brand-new, the party "appears to have out-organized the other seven [parties] in the race."<sup>56</sup> In short, ARENA, as an authoritarian successor party, was able to inherit from the previous military regime the kind of mass-based, nationwide organization that most new conservative parties can only dream of.

Source of Party Cohesion. The third resource that authoritarian successor parties may inherit is a source of cohesion. As discussed above, parties need some form of glue or "Poxipol" to prevent them from suffering schisms. Scholars disagree about why some parties are more prone to schisms than others. Many accounts emphasize the role of

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<sup>55</sup> Fernando Sagrera, quoted in Galeas (2004: 12).

<sup>56</sup> See "Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador," *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

“patronage” or the spoils of office for maintaining cohesion, especially in the context of authoritarian ruling parties. However, as Levitsky and Way (2012: 870) have argued in an important article, “[p]atronage may ensure elite cooperation during normal times, but it often fails to do so during crises.” In other words, patronage ceases to be an adequate source of cohesion at precisely the moments when it is most important for parties to hang together. Based on their analysis of the trajectories of party-based authoritarian regimes, these authors argue that a far more robust source of cohesion is a history of “sustained, violent, and ideologically-driven conflict” (Levitsky and Way 2012: 870). When party activists have fought in the trenches together, they are likely to feel a sense of mission or “*mística*,” to feel a sense of camaraderie toward one another and to confer higher levels of legitimacy on party leaders. They are also unlikely to entertain the possibility of defecting to opposition parties—parties that, until recently, were literally their mortal enemies. For these reasons, a history of joint struggle can act as an important source of cohesion for new parties.<sup>57</sup>

Authoritarian successor parties often inherit this source of cohesion and are thus born with a valuable resource. While Levitsky and Way (2012) mainly have in mind revolutionary and anti-colonial movements when making their argument, there is good reason to believe that rightist and counterinsurgent struggles can also be a source of party cohesion. As Slater (2010) has demonstrated in his study of “authoritarian Leviathans” in Southeast Asia, top-down struggles against particularly menacing forms of contentious politics can produce high levels of cohesion among party leaders and economic elites. In Latin America, many authoritarian regimes prior to the third wave had come to power in the context of intense polarization and the perception of powerful leftist threats (see below).

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<sup>57</sup> For a similar argument, see LeBas (2011).

Those who seized power and installed authoritarian regimes presented their actions as necessary in order to save the nation from oblivion. While most observers considered these regimes to be murderous dictatorships, the incumbents of these regimes, unsurprisingly, saw themselves differently. In their view, they were soldiers on the frontlines of the Cold War who struggled bravely, at great personal cost, against the imported ideology of Marxism and its totalitarian aspirations for Latin America. They did not see themselves as perpetrators of “dirty wars”; instead, they were participants in a heroic struggle to save the fatherland from an implacable—and, many believed, foreign (Cuba and the Soviet Union)—enemy. The authoritarian successor parties that grew out of these dictatorships inherited this memory of joint struggle and, as such, were born with a valuable source of cohesion.

This source of cohesion can be seen in the case of the UDI in Chile, a party that possesses a level of unity and discipline “difficult to find outside Leninist structured left-wing parties” (Pollack 1999: 117). In part, this cohesion is a product of the homogeneous cultural and religious background of its leaders (Joignant and Navia 2003). However, it also stems from “a common political perspective, which was forged to an important extent in the fires of the struggle against the Popular Unity” (Valdivia 2008b: 145). In the 1970s, most UDI leaders participated in the so-called “*gremialista*” movement, which was described by party founder Jaime Guzmán (2008: 63) as “the vanguard of the struggle against the Popular Unity.” They felt obligated to resist the Allende government because they “did not accept that a minority should subject [the people] to a totalitarian and foreign doctrine” (Guzmán 2008: 100). This perceived struggle against leftist totalitarianism took them first into the streets, and then into the halls of power as part of the 1973-1990 military regime. The climax came in April 1991, when Guzmán was assassinated by leftist guerrillas. To this day,

UDI members describe Guzmán's murder as an act of "martyrdom," and his perceived sacrifice continues to serve as a source of inspiration. Thus, just like parties forged in revolutionary and anti-colonial movements, joint struggle can act as a source of cohesion for authoritarian successor parties like the UDI. By reducing the likelihood of schism, this form of inheritance can help them to avoid one of the most common causes of party collapse.

Clientelistic Networks. In addition to the three core party-building ingredients described above, authoritarian successor parties may also benefit from two other forms of authoritarian inheritance. First, they may inherit clientelistic networks. In order for clientelism to be effective, it is necessary to have a clientele, that is, a group of individuals locked into a stable relationship of dependency with their patron. For this, the patron must become known to his clients and be viewed as reliable, and clients must come to expect and depend on payoffs from their patron. As Hagopian (1996) demonstrates in her classic work on traditional politics in Brazil, patrons are sometimes able to retain their clientelistic networks after a regime transition, and subsequently "lend" the support of these networks to incumbents of the new regime. Authoritarian successor parties often inherit clientelistic networks forged during the previous dictatorship. Few authoritarian regimes seek to hold onto power through coercion alone; instead, they attempt to build popular support through various means, including the selective distribution of material goods. When authoritarian successor parties succeed in transferring these clientelistic networks to themselves, they inherit a valuable resource. This is particularly important for conservative parties, given that clientelism is one of the key strategies for building a multiclass electoral coalition.

The case of Chile under Pinochet, and the UDI after the transition to democracy, illustrates the potential importance of this resource. During the dictatorship (1973-1990),

the military “sought to win the support of the poorest sectors through clientelist policies, deliberately distributing economic resources, particularly through municipalities, so as to create and increase support for the military regime” (Huneus 2007: 274). After the transition to democracy, many of the mayors responsible for distributing this material largess joined the UDI and ran for Congress in the very municipalities they had governed during the dictatorship. Transferring to themselves the loyalties generated by the practice of authoritarian clientelism, many of these ex-mayors were elected. Indeed, of the 14 UDI members elected to the lower house in 1989, 10 had been mayors during the military regime. The fact that the UDI inherited a clientele of poor and dependent voters was a major factor in the party’s early success. As Klein (2004: 324) puts it: “In the end, the network of clientelism and patronage, which the party was able to establish because of its privileged position during the military regime, primarily explains the UDI’s electoral successes in the shantytowns since 1989.” In short, authoritarian inheritance in the form of clientelistic networks can be a valuable resource when attempting to build a multiclass coalition.

Business Connections. Finally, authoritarian successor parties may inherit business connections, and through these connections, access to a valuable source of party finance. As Gibson (1996: 216) notes: “Historically, Latin American business has remained an aloof ally in the electoral struggles of conservative parties.” Instead, what Schneider (2010) calls the “portfolio of business investment in politics” has tilted toward other types of political action, such as lobbying and outright corruption. Wishing to leave their options open, and understandably skeptical about the prospects of conservative party start-ups, business in most Latin American countries has avoided openly backing conservative parties. Authoritarian successor parties have the potential to disrupt this pattern of business



detachment from conservative parties, through both direct and indirect mechanisms. In countries where business was part of the social coalition backing authoritarian rule, authoritarian successor parties may directly inherit the reputation of being serious and trustworthy allies. Alternatively, authoritarian successor parties may inherit business support indirectly through their electoral performance. Nobody wants to place money on a losing bet, and, based on the historical record, the odds suggest that most new conservative parties in Latin America are destined to be losers. However, if a new conservative party is able to perform well in early elections—particularly in “founding elections”<sup>58</sup>—as a result of other forms of authoritarian inheritance (e.g., brand, clientelistic networks), business is likely to take notice and may conclude that backing the party is not a waste of time and money after all. If an authoritarian successor party inherits business support from the old regime, it will likely have greater access to financial resources, which can be used for organizational upkeep (e.g., salaries, vehicles), campaign spending (particularly on expensive television advertising) and the maintenance of clientelistic networks through private donations (Luna 2010).

This dynamic clearly played out in the cases of the UDI in Chile and ARENA in El Salvador. In Chile, business elites were intensely loyal to the Pinochet regime, due to the traumatic memory of the 1970-1973 government of Salvador Allende (Frieden 1991), and also because the regime established a pattern of consultation with business associations in its later years (Silva 1996). After democratization, the UDI benefited from these close ties; because the party “came to represent the dictatorship’s economic and political legacy,” it enjoyed “special allegiance from...business interests” (Luna 2010: 333). In El Salvador, ties between the authoritarian regime and business elites had also been extremely close. When a

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<sup>58</sup> For a discussion of the importance for parties’ long-term prospects of securing a good result in “founding elections,” see O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 61-64) and Hale (2006: 17-18).

reformist military government took power in 1979, many of these business elites transferred their old loyalties to the country's newly formed "death squads" and, subsequently, to the death squads' partisan extension, ARENA. As a result, from its birth, ARENA enjoyed a level of business support virtually without parallel in Latin America (Koivumäki 2010). This support, in turn, allowed the party's spending at election time to be "in a different league than that of...other parties" (Wood 2000a: 249) in the country.

If a new conservative party is born with any or all of these forms of authoritarian inheritance, it has an advantage over similar parties born with less starting political capital. Indeed, the ideal typical authoritarian successor party has all the ingredients to be a truly formidable force. It has an attractive brand, a robust territorial organization, a source of cohesion rooted in joint struggle, networks of poor voters dependent on it for clientelistic payouts and a business community willing to bankroll its activities. Such a party is in a strong position to overcome the major challenge of conservative party-building: the construction of a multiclass electoral coalition. This capacity stems not only from the individual contributions of each form of authoritarian inheritance, but also from the potential synergies among them. For example, if a party inherits a strong territorial organization, this can be deployed to deliver payouts to its clientelistic networks. Similarly, if a party inherits the support of business, it can use the donations that it receives from allied businessmen to finance these payouts. In turn, it will be easier to maintain the support of the business community if a party has a strong brand and demonstrates a high degree of cohesion, since these qualities will make it seem like a party worth supporting.

In all of these ways, then, authoritarian inheritance can provide new conservative parties with the tools to thrive under democracy. As I illustrate in the empirical chapters

that follow, this theory, unlike the alternative explanations considered in Chapter 1, can explain variation in conservative party-building in Latin America since the onset of the third wave. This is true not only for the four cases that I examine in detail, but also for the larger universe of cases. Specifically, my theory of authoritarian inheritance can explain why all successful new conservative parties were also authoritarian successor parties. Yet, even if this argument is true, it raises some obvious questions. First, aren't there any downsides to having links to a former dictatorship? Second, if authoritarian inheritance was the key to successful conservative party-building, and authoritarian successor parties are the main recipients of authoritarian inheritance, why did conservative authoritarian successor parties form in some countries but not others? Finally, even if such parties *had* formed in other countries—for example, in Argentina—would they really have been as successful as, say, the UDI or ARENA? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to take a step back and look at the conditions in each country prior to party formation.

### Antecedent Conditions

In the preceding pages, I argued that a key determinant of conservative party-building was authoritarian inheritance. I claimed that this could explain the puzzling fact that all successful new conservative parties in Latin America since the onset of the third wave were also authoritarian successor parties. Yet, in making this argument, questions emerged about why authoritarian successor parties formed in some countries but not others, and about the hypothetical viability of such parties in countries where they did not form. Moreover, suspicions were raised about the downside of having links to a former

dictatorship in the context of democracy. In this final section, I address the fact that authoritarian successor parties are almost invariably also the recipients of negative inheritance, or what I call “authoritarian baggage.” Nevertheless, some authoritarian regimes produce more baggage than others, and I argue that this simple insight helps to explain why conservative authoritarian successor parties form in some countries but not others. Specifically, I argue that formation or non-formation can be explained in terms of the relative balance between potential authoritarian inheritance and potential authoritarian baggage. This relative balance, in turn, is rooted in what the historical institutionalist literature calls “antecedent conditions,” specifically the kind that Slater and Simmons (2010) have dubbed “critical antecedents.” Three antecedent conditions, I argue, are particularly important: (1) the nature of the authoritarian regime, (2) the performance of the authoritarian regime and (3) the level of threat before or after the authoritarian regime.

The basic premise of this study is that new parties can sometimes inherit valuable resources from past authoritarian regimes. Clearly, though, there are also drawbacks to building a party on the legacy of a dictatorship. Authoritarian regimes kill, torture, imprison and repress their populations in a variety of ways. Even if they otherwise perform competently by providing, for example, national defense, macroeconomic stability and public order, a party linked to such a regime will inevitably bear the stain of having participated in past repression. Moreover, and crucially, many authoritarian regimes *do not* otherwise perform competently. Unaccountable to the public and surrounded by sycophants, dictators may launch disastrous wars, loot the state and generally drive their countries to ruin. For every Lee Kuan Yew, there is also a Mobutu. In order to understand why authoritarian successor parties form in some countries but not others, it is therefore

necessary to look at both the potential benefits *and* the potential costs of building a party upon the platform of a former dictatorship. Earlier in this chapter, I defined *authoritarian inheritance* as a type of “starting political capital,” or “the stock of assets [that parties] possess that might be translated into electoral success” (Hale 2004: 996). To continue with this metaphor, we can define *authoritarian baggage* as precisely the opposite: the stock of liabilities with which authoritarian successor parties are burdened that might impede electoral success. All potential authoritarian successor parties will possess a mix of authoritarian inheritance and authoritarian baggage; the proportions, however, will vary dramatically from case to case.

This simple framework of authoritarian-inheritance-versus-authoritarian-baggage can help to explain why new conservative parties in some Latin American countries took the form of authoritarian successor parties, while in others they did not. In cases where economic elites believe that authoritarian inheritance will outweigh authoritarian baggage, they will be more inclined to work with outgoing authoritarian incumbents when forming new conservative parties. In contrast, if they believe that authoritarian baggage will outweigh authoritarian inheritance, they will prefer to cut ties to the old regime and build parties on their own. Chile is an illustration of the first scenario. The Pinochet regime was an extremely violent dictatorship that was passionately opposed by much of the Chilean population. Many Chileans, however, viewed the regime favorably, believing that it had saved the country from Marxist totalitarianism and implemented a successful model of economic development. This record meant that a party linked to the old regime would be burdened with the stain of human rights abuse, but would also be able to draw on a record of achievement in other areas. On balance, this made a party like the UDI seem like a potentially viable entity, which helps to explain why upper-class Chileans supported it after

the transition to democracy. Argentina is an illustration of the second scenario. Like its Chilean counterpart, the 1976-1983 dictatorship in Argentina was extremely violent and was opposed by much of the country's population. Unlike its Chilean counterpart, however, the Argentine dictatorship had no accompanying record of accomplishments: by all accounts, the regime was an utter fiasco, badly mismanaging the economy and leading the country to military defeat in the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War. This helps to explain why no national-level conservative authoritarian successor party formed in Argentina,<sup>59</sup> and also allows for some informed counterfactual speculation about such a party's prospects if it *had* formed. Because of the military regime's poor record in office, any association with it was toxic. This helps to explain why the UCEDE, the major conservative party that formed during the country's transition to democracy, had relatively good democratic credentials and made efforts to distance itself from the old regime. An authoritarian successor party in Argentina would have been born with an immense amount of baggage and very little inheritance. It is almost certain that such a party, if it had formed, would have been a colossal failure.

If the formation or non-formation of conservative authoritarian successor parties can be understood in terms of the relative balance of authoritarian inheritance and authoritarian baggage, what are the main determinants of that balance? In other words, why

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<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, former authoritarian incumbents had better luck at the subnational level. The most notable case is that of General Antonio Domingo Bussi in the province of Tucumán. Bussi had been the military governor of the province in 1976-1977, and carried out widespread human rights abuses in the battle against leftist guerrillas. His supporters, however, credited him with having saved Tucumán from "subversion," which led to a reservoir of good will toward him from a portion of the population. In 1995, he returned to the governor's office through democratic means with a new authoritarian successor party, Republican Force. When he later tried to scale up to the national level, however, he was much less successful. The reason for Bussi's relative success at the subnational level but failure at the national level illustrates the applicability of the authoritarian-inheritance-versus-authoritarian-baggage framework. In Tucumán, the population appears to have supported the military's measures during the dictatorship more strongly than elsewhere in Argentina, which provided a source of authoritarian inheritance for Bussi and his party in the province after the transition to democracy. However, at the national level, the dictatorship was more widely discredited. Thus, what was a source of authoritarian inheritance in Tucumán was a source of authoritarian baggage in the country as a whole. For more, see Chapter 5 of this study.

is building new conservative parties on the basis of former dictatorships a viable strategy in some countries but not others? In order to answer this question, it is useful to draw on the historical institutionalist literature. There is a long tradition within this literature of explaining outcomes according to the framework of the “critical juncture,”<sup>60</sup> which Collier and Collier (1991: 29) originally defined as “a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other units of analysis) and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies.” As a result of the critical juncture, cases are put on distinct paths of institutional development. Because of the phenomenon of “positive feedback” or “increasing returns” (Pierson 2004), it later becomes increasingly difficult to veer from this path—at least, until there is a new critical juncture. This framework of critical junctures and increasing returns is known as “path dependence.”

While all scholars working within this tradition agree on this basic outline, they disagree about the nature of critical junctures. According to some scholars, the defining feature of critical junctures is the high degree of *contingency* present at such moments, with actors believed to be free of many of the constraints operative in “normal” times.<sup>61</sup> Mahoney (2001: 6) captured this idea well when he characterized critical junctures as “choice points.” Other scholars, however, downplay contingency, and emphasize instead the *divergence* set in motion by the critical juncture.<sup>62</sup> Before the critical juncture, a case is on a particular path; after the critical juncture, it diverges, either relative to its own previous path

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<sup>60</sup> The literature in this area is massive. For a small sample of notable works, see Collier and Collier (1991); Mahoney (2001); and Pierson (2004). Not all historical institutionalists work within the critical junctures framework. For a discussion of alternative approaches, see Thelen (2003) and Mahoney and Thelen (2010).

<sup>61</sup> For the most explicit defense of this conception of critical junctures, see Capoccia and Kelemen (2007). For a thoughtful recent work that also adopts this understanding of critical junctures, see Soifer (2012).

<sup>62</sup> In making this distinction between critical junctures as moments of contingency and critical junctures as moments of divergence, I draw on Slater and Simmons (2010: 889-890).

or relative to other cases in a cross-case comparison. Playing on Mahoney's (2001) notion of critical junctures as "choice points," we might describe critical junctures in this second version of the argument as "turning points." The "choice point" version of the argument makes bold claims about the nature of historical causation and about the relationship between agency and structure, arguing that there are key moments in history when agency exerts an outsized influence, followed by long periods during which structure predominates.<sup>63</sup> The "turning point" version, in contrast, makes more modest claims. While it agrees that critical junctures set in motion path-dependent processes, it is more skeptical—or, at least, agnostic—about the role of agency during critical junctures.

One of the key differences between these two versions of the critical juncture argument has to do with the causal weight given to "antecedent conditions."<sup>64</sup> To be sure, all scholars working within this tradition pay lip service to the importance of conditions in place prior to the critical juncture. Yet, as Slater and Simmons (2010) have demonstrated, the term is often used in vague and even contradictory ways. Based on their reading of the literature, Slater and Simmons (2010) identify four different common usages of the term "antecedent conditions." The first version understands antecedent conditions as

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<sup>63</sup> Capoccia and Kelemen (2007: 344) describe this as "[t]he dualist conception of political and institutional development," which is characterized by "an alternation between moments of fluidity and rapid change and longer phases of relative stability and institutional reproduction."

<sup>64</sup> In truth, the difference between the two versions of the critical junctures argument that I have described is more one of degree than of kind. Mahoney (2001), for example, whom Capoccia and Kelemen (2007: 347) cite as an exemplar of the critical-juncture-as-contingency approach, does not completely ignore the existence of antecedent conditions. On the contrary, he writes that "[t]he degree to which these antecedent conditions determine actor choices during critical junctures can vary, ranging from choices characterized by a high degree of individual discretion to choices that are more deeply embedded in earlier occurrences" (Mahoney 2001: 7). However, he specifies that "[i]n many cases, critical junctures are moments of relative structural indeterminism when willful actors shape outcomes in a more voluntaristic fashion than normal circumstances permit" (Mahoney 2001: 7). On the flipside, Slater and Simmons (2010: 890), while highly skeptical of this critical-juncture-as-contingency approach, nevertheless admit that "[c]ritical juncture are typically moments of expanding agency," though they specify that they are virtually never moments of "complete contingency."



“descriptive context,” which “may have nothing to do with a causal process” (Slater and Simmons 2010: 889). The second refers to possible “rival hypotheses,” which is related to the notion of omitted variables (Slater and Simmons 2010: 889). The third refers to “background similarities,” which are the control variables that one hopes to hold constant in a most-similar-cases comparison (Slater and Simmons 2010: 889). Finally, and most importantly for this study, there is the understanding of antecedent conditions as “critical antecedents,” which they define as “factors or conditions preceding a critical juncture that combine with causal forces during a critical juncture to produce long-term divergences in outcome” (Slater and Simmons 2010: 889).<sup>65</sup> To illustrate, they use the analogy of a bottle that is shattered by a stone.<sup>66</sup> Did the bottle break because it was hit by a stone or because it was brittle? The answer, of course, is both. According to Slater and Simmons’ (2010) framework, the brittleness of the bottle would be considered a critical antecedent. During the critical juncture, this critical antecedent interacted with an exogenous shock—the throwing of the stone—to produce the outcome of a broken bottle.

This notion of critical antecedents has important implications when attempting to explain historical divergence among political units, and has a natural affinity to what I earlier called the “turning point” version of the critical juncture argument. In their discussion of the bottle analogy, Slater and Simmons (2010: 891) spell out these implications: “[S]ocieties are not as alike as bottles; not all background conditions are background similarities. When antecedent conditions vary across cases, it becomes essential to examine whether preexisting

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<sup>65</sup> Slater and Simmons (2010: 889) describe the difference between critical antecedents and other antecedent conditions as follows: “Unlike descriptive context, critical antecedents help cause the outcome of interest. Unlike rival hypotheses, their causal effect is indirect and combinatory. And unlike background similarities, critical antecedents entail antecedent variation or divergence: across cases in a cross-case analysis or across time in a single case.”

<sup>66</sup> For the original use of this bottle analogy, see Rigby (1995).

variation predisposed cases to diverge after the critical juncture as they did. The cases in any historical comparison might have been very different *places* before a critical juncture set them on very different *paths*. They might have *varied* in causal factors of interest before they began to *diverge* in our ultimate outcomes of interest.”<sup>67</sup> In short, even if we believe that cases have been put on distinct paths in which they are subject to increasing returns due to an earlier critical juncture, it is impossible to understand *why* each case ended up on its particular path without examining the critical antecedents that helped to put it there. There is still some room for contingency in this understanding of critical junctures. As Slater and Simmons (2010: 891) put it, critical antecedents “predispose (but do not predestine) cases to diverge as they ultimately do.” Ultimately, though, this is a much more modest version of the critical juncture argument. Critical junctures matter, but so do critical antecedents.

This notion of critical antecedents is useful for explaining the relative balance of authoritarian inheritance and authoritarian baggage—and, by extension, the formation or non-formation of conservative authoritarian successor parties in Latin America. According to this understanding, the third wave of democratization was a critical juncture, understood in the more modest “turning point” version of the argument described above. As argued in the introduction, the region’s transition to democracy was the product, at least in part, of two exogenous shocks: changing international conditions and the debt crisis of the 1980s. In response to the resulting loss of the coup option, elites throughout Latin America formed new conservative parties to defend their interests. In some countries, new conservative parties took the form of authoritarian successor parties; in others, they did not. Depending on which of these two forms new conservative parties took, countries were put on very

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<sup>67</sup> Soifer (2012: 1576) pithily summarizes this argument as claiming that “cases differed before they diverged.”

different paths: one of these paths led to success, the other to failure. Yet the selection of one path or another was not a truly contingent outcome. Founders of new conservative parties in Latin America did not select their paths from a wide-open field of options. Instead, three critical antecedents related to the previous authoritarian regime had a decisive impact on which of these two paths was taken: (1) the nature of the regime, (2) the performance of the regime and (3) the level of threat before or after the regime.

### *Nature of the Authoritarian Regime*

The first and most obvious critical antecedent is the nature of the previous authoritarian regime. In Chapter 1, I argued that it was preferable to adopt a sociological definition of conservative parties over an ideological definition. However, I also argued that there was an elective affinity between the sociological definition of conservative parties and ideological definitions of the right, since parties that draw their core constituency from the upper strata of society will naturally be averse to large-scale redistribution. This basic insight also helps to explain the relationship between economic elites and authoritarian regimes. For obvious reasons, economic elites will tend to have a more favorable view of right-leaning dictatorships than left-leaning dictatorships. When left-leaning dictators are in power, they are likely to carry out policies harmful to the interests of economic elites. They may expropriate their property, enact unwelcome regulations, demonize them rhetorically and even subject them to violent persecution. Such an experience constitutes a critical antecedent. To be sure, for parts of the population, such actions against elites are likely to be viewed favorably, which translates into a potential form of authoritarian inheritance. However, for economic elites themselves, such a history will be seen as an intolerable form

of authoritarian baggage and definitively rule out the possibility of building a conservative party in partnership with incumbents of the outgoing regime. Such a regime may provide a platform for the construction of a *non-conservative* authoritarian successor party—something that, as we will see, occurred in some countries in Latin America—but it cannot provide the platform for a *conservative* authoritarian successor party. Simply put, you cannot build a conservative party on the foundation of a left-wing dictatorship.

This critical antecedent helps to explain the non-formation of conservative authoritarian successor parties in some Latin America countries. While it is true that most authoritarian regimes in the region immediately prior to the third wave were right-leaning, there were some exceptions. The three most notable exceptions were Peru under General Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975), Panama under General Omar Torrijos (1968-1981) and Nicaragua under the Sandinistas (1979-1990). To varying degrees, each of these dictatorships carried out reforms that were harmful to the interests of economic elites.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, all three of these countries actually saw the formation of authoritarian successor parties, two of which—Panama’s Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and Nicaragua’s Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)—went on to become unambiguous cases of successful party-building.<sup>69</sup> None of them produced *conservative* authoritarian successor parties, however. This possibility was foreclosed by the left-leaning nature of the previous regime.

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<sup>68</sup> On the Peruvian regime, see Lowenthal and McClintock (1975) and McClintock and Lowenthal (1983); on the Panamanian regime, see Harding (2001); and on the Nicaraguan regime, see Spalding (1994).

<sup>69</sup> The PRD and especially the FSLN are left-leaning authoritarian successor parties. Both, for example, are members of the Socialist International, and both grew out of left-leaning dictatorships. They are also among the most successful new parties in Latin America, easily meeting Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck’s (n.d.) criteria for successful party-building. The Peruvian regime also produced a left-leaning authoritarian successor party: the Socialist Revolutionary Party (PSR). During the 1980s, the PSR formed part of Peru’s United Left (IU) coalition (Roberts 1998). The PSR itself, however, was miniscule and must therefore be scored as a failure.

More controversially, I argue that one of the reasons that Guatemala never saw the emergence of a conservative authoritarian successor party was the nature of the dictatorship (1982-1983) of General Efraín Ríos Montt. To be sure, Ríos Montt was not a “leftist” by any definition of the word. During his short tenure, he oversaw the intensification of a “scorched earth” military campaign against guerrillas and suspected supporters in the countryside.<sup>70</sup> The violence that ensued was extraordinary even by the bloody standards of Guatemala: many thousands of people—most of them indigenous—were slaughtered in a wave of terror that probably meets the legal definition of “genocide.”<sup>71</sup> Yet, while Ríos Montt was clearly a rightist when it came to the issue of “order,” he was not particularly right-wing on socioeconomic issues. In fact, he had an acrimonious relationship with the private sector, “criticiz[ing] private business for excessive greed and irresponsibility and charg[ing] that companies owned by Guatemalans earned usurious profits, evaded taxes, and exported capital illegally with no regard for domestic consequences” (Garrard-Burnett 1998: 143). In office, he attempted to raise taxes on the rich and, most fatefully of all, attempted to carry out land reform.<sup>72</sup> These economic policies “alienated large landowners, leaders of the business community and eventually much of the middle class” (Handy 1984: 267). In addition, Ríos Montt, who had become a fundamentalist evangelical Christian in the late 1970s, alienated many by using the bully pulpit of the presidency to proselytize on behalf of

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<sup>70</sup> For a description of this campaign, see Schirmer (1998).

<sup>71</sup> Elisabeth Malkin, “Former Leader of Guatemala Is Guilty of Genocide Against Mayan Group,” *The New York Times*, 10 May 2013.

<sup>72</sup> For a discussion of Ríos Montt’s plans for land reform, see Handy (1984: 269-270).

his church.<sup>73</sup> This “exotic messianism” was another reason that Ríos Montt became an “embarrassment to the ruling class” (Trudeau 1993: 63), and was finally overthrown in a palace coup in August 1983. For these reasons, Ríos Montt’s dictatorship was not a viable platform for the construction of a conservative authoritarian successor party. However, as will be seen in Chapter 8, it *was* a viable platform for the construction of a fairly successful non-conservative authoritarian successor party. While elites may have found him embarrassing, many ordinary Guatemalans were attracted to Ríos Montt’s blend of *mano dura* and fundamentalist Christianity. In fact, he came to be viewed by a significant portion of the population as a “popular hero” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 9), and, when he later formed his Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), it quickly became one of the most-voted-for parties in Guatemala—albeit one with a very cool relationship with the country’s upper strata.<sup>74</sup>

#### *Performance of the Authoritarian Regime*

A second critical antecedent is the performance of the previous authoritarian regime. Scholars have long recognized that democracies vary widely in terms of performance, which has given rise to a significant literature on the “quality of democracy.”<sup>75</sup> It would be distasteful to try and develop a comprehensive “quality of autocracy” index, but the basic

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<sup>73</sup> This prompted *Newsweek* in 1982 to describe Ríos Montt as “Guatemala’s ayatollah” (quoted in Garrard-Burnett 2010: 24), and earned him the nickname “Dios Montt” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 64), in a play on the Spanish for “God.”

<sup>74</sup> For example, during the FRG presidency (2000-2004) of Alfonso Portillo, the government had a “virulently adversarial relationship with the private sector” (Sánchez 2008: 137). Indeed, it was one of the first times that the private sector “fac[ed] a government with which it did not enjoy traditional sources of leverage and linkage. The FRG’s strident anti-oligarchic discourse frightened many entrepreneurs” (Sánchez 2009: 119).

<sup>75</sup> For a review of this literature and a thoughtful discussion of the concept of “quality of democracy,” see Mazzuca (2010).

insight of this literature—namely, that regimes of the same type can vary greatly in terms of performance—can be usefully applied to dictatorships to explain the likelihood of authoritarian successor party formation. Performance is important for all regimes, but it is arguably even more important for dictatorships than for democracies. As Huntington (1991) argued in *The Third Wave*, authoritarian regimes in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century found it difficult to maintain legitimacy.<sup>76</sup> As the idea of democracy gained increasing acceptance and competing legitimizing principles (e.g., divine right of kings, Marxism-Leninism) became discredited, dictators had to seek legitimacy through other means. In part, they could depend on what Huntington (1991: 49-50) called “negative legitimacy,” by which he meant justifying their rule in terms of what they were against: “communism,” “subversion,” “anarchy,” etc. With time, however, they were obliged to supplement negative legitimacy with positive legitimacy, too. As Huntington (1991: 50) explains: “Inevitably, negative legitimacy declined with time. The authoritarian regimes of the 1960s and 1970s were almost inescapably driven to look to performance as a principal if not the principal source of legitimacy.” Huntington (1991: 50-54) argued that two areas were especially important: economic performance and military performance. While his main objective was to explain authoritarian regime breakdown, these two factors are also useful for explaining the formation or non-formation of conservative authoritarian successor parties.

First, authoritarian regimes that suffer military defeats are far less likely to produce authoritarian successor parties. As many scholars have noted, there is nothing worse for the maintenance of authoritarian rule than losing a war.<sup>77</sup> Even if this does not result in direct

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<sup>76</sup> For an earlier version of this argument, see O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 15).

<sup>77</sup> See O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 17-18); Huntington (1991: 54); Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens (1992: 70-71); and Przeworski and Limongi (1997: 158).

military occupation, it is devastating to national pride and it puts in stark relief the poor judgment and incompetence of the governing authorities. When an authoritarian regime ends under such conditions, it is exceedingly unlikely that a viable authoritarian successor party will emerge. This factor helps to explain why no conservative authoritarian successor party emerged in Argentina at the national level after the fall of the 1976-1983 military regime. In April 1982, in the wake of mounting economic problems and opposition protests, the military authorities launched a disastrous invasion of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands, which had been under British control since 1833 but which Argentina claimed as part of its national territory.<sup>78</sup> Although Argentine society was almost unanimously in favor of the move, public opinion turned dramatically after the country's surrender to British forces two and a half months later. In the ensuing transition to democracy, the Argentine military—unlike its counterparts in neighboring countries—exercised very little control. Indeed, they could not even prevent themselves from being put on trial for human rights violations.<sup>79</sup> In this setting, the formation of a viable authoritarian successor party was simply unthinkable.

Second, authoritarian regimes that maintain a strong economic performance are more likely to produce authoritarian successor parties. Authoritarian regimes are not, on average, more competent stewards of the economy than democracies (Remmer 1990; Przeworski and Limongi 1993; Domínguez 1998). While it is true that authoritarian regimes often come to power during economic crises, their ability to manage the economy after taking power varies widely. Some authoritarian regimes manage their economies effectively, experiencing economic growth and low inflation; others are as bad as or worse than the

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<sup>78</sup> For a description of the Falklands/Malvinas War, see Lewis (2002: 90-92).

<sup>79</sup> See Sikkink (2011).



democratic governments that preceded them and oversee economic catastrophes. When the economy performs strongly under an authoritarian regime, it is more likely that a viable authoritarian successor party will form. This factor helps to explain the formation and success of Chile's UDI and Bolivia's ADN. While it is true, as Domínguez (1998) has noted, that accounts of the "Chilean miracle" have been exaggerated, Chile experienced high growth and low inflation during the second half of the 1980s, which corresponded to the final years of the dictatorship (see Chapter 4). Even members of the opposition recognized the regime's strong economic performance. In the words of one prominent Socialist Party leader: "Most Latin American military dictatorships ran disastrous economies. Pinochet's was the exception" (Muñoz 2008: 306). The same was true of the Banzer dictatorship (1971-1978) in Bolivia. Because of an increase in international mineral prices and a cheapening of international credit, Bolivia experienced an economic boom under Banzer's rule.<sup>80</sup> These strong economic performances in Chile under Pinochet and in Bolivia under Banzer helped to make the formation of an authoritarian successor party in each country a viable enterprise. The UDI and ADN were rooted, respectively, in the Pinochet and Banzer experiences; as such, they could expect to benefit from memories of these dictatorships' economic performances, which constituted an important form of authoritarian inheritance. In contrast, the economic performance of the 1976-1983 dictatorship in Argentina was disastrous, with high inflation and negative growth (see Chapter 5). This, combined with the 1982 defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas War, made any association with the military regime toxic and foreclosed the possibility of forming a conservative authoritarian successor party.

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<sup>80</sup> Between 1971 and 1976, Bolivia had an average annual growth rate of 5.7 percent (Conaghan and Malloy 1994: 57). For more on Bolivia's economic performance under Banzer, see Klein (2011: 228-234).

### *Level of Threat Before or After the Authoritarian Regime*

The final critical antecedent is the level of threat prior to the establishment of the authoritarian regime or immediately after its fall. In evaluating the performance of an authoritarian regime, it is important to look not only at objective indicators, such as military and economic performance, but also at more subjective factors that could affect the population's assessment. The most important such factor is the level of "threat" in a country. The "threat variable," as it is sometimes called,<sup>81</sup> has been used to explain a range of phenomena, including the level of repression employed by authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell 1978), the creation of encompassing business associations (Silva and Durand 1998), elite support for state- and party-building (Slater 2010), elite attitudes toward democracy (Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992; Winters 2011: 25-26), business support for authoritarian regimes (Frieden 1991; Campero 1995: 131-132) and business support for conservative parties (Gibson 1996: 217-219; Koivumäki 2010; Lemus 2012).<sup>82</sup> Underlying these arguments are two key ideas: first, people are more willing to engage in collective action when faced with a severe threat to their way of life; and second, they are likely to view favorably those who promise to "save" them from that threat.

These twin ideas about the impact of threat on collective action and support for "saviors" have important implications for the formation of conservative authoritarian successor parties. We would expect high levels of threat to encourage the formation of such parties for two reasons. First, high levels of threat are likely to result in high levels of what Huntington (1991: 49) called "negative legitimacy" for the authoritarian regime. In his

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<sup>81</sup> See, for example, Silva and Durand (1998: 7) and Lemus (2012: 193).

<sup>82</sup> Duverger's (1964: xxvii) argument about "contagion from the Left," Huntington's (1968: 419) argument about how "[o]rganization from below stimulates organization above," and Shefter's (1994: 6) argument about "countermobilization" could also all be framed in terms of threat.

description of authoritarian regimes in the 1960s and 1970s, he noted that “[t]he new regimes typically justified themselves on the grounds that they were combatting communism and internal subversion, reducing social turmoil, reestablishing law and order, eliminating corruption and venal civilian politicians, and enhancing national values” (Huntington 1991: 49-50). The greater the threat the authoritarian regime claims to be fighting, the greater the negative legitimacy it is likely to enjoy. This factor can be expected to operate whether the threat precedes or follows the authoritarian regime. If the authoritarian regime is *preceded* by a severe threat, the negative legitimacy of the regime will likely last for longer than if the threat were mild. If the authoritarian regime is *followed* by a severe threat, this is likely to improve people’s retrospective evaluation of the regime. In other words, they will be reminded of what they needed to be “saved” from in the first place, and they will feel nostalgic for the salvation that the old regime provided. Either way, would-be founders of an authoritarian successor party can expect to benefit from these memories of trauma and salvation, which increases the likelihood of their party being a viable entity.

Second, high levels of threat are more likely to result in greater levels of collective action in support of the authoritarian regime and, later, the authoritarian successor party that it spawns. For example, in their analyses of the political effects of the debt crisis of the early 1980s, Frieden (1991) and Haggard and Kaufman (1995) find that the Chilean dictatorship, unlike many of its regional counterparts, managed to survive the crisis because it retained the support of the business community and different military factions. While in other countries, parts of the business community and some military factions abandoned authoritarian regimes, in Chile they remained united in their support for Pinochet. The reason, these scholars argue, was because of the traumatic memory of the Allende government (1970-1973) and the

extraordinary threat that they believed that it had posed.<sup>83</sup> As a result, the Chilean military regime was able to end on a “high note” in the late 1980s, amidst economic growth and an orderly transfer of power, rather than in a crisis-induced collapse. This contributed to the perception that the dictatorship had performed well, which was an important form of authoritarian inheritance for the UDI. In other countries, it was the existence of a severe threat *after* the fall of an authoritarian regime that encouraged collective action by powerful groups. For example, the left-leaning military junta that came to power in El Salvador in October 1979 was perceived as a severe threat by the private sector. This compelled economic elites to support “death squad” killings and, later, to mobilize resources for the death squads’ partisan extension, ARENA. In sum, in addition to increasing negative legitimacy, high levels of threat can contribute to authoritarian successor party formation by encouraging collective action by powerful groups in support of the authoritarian regime (thereby improving regime performance) and, subsequently, its partisan successor.

Although there are good theoretical grounds to believe that the “threat variable” can help to explain authoritarian successor party formation, there are also good methodological reasons to be wary of this line of argument. As Remmer and Merkx (1982: 10) pointed out in a classic review of Guillermo O’Donnell’s work on bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, threat is “not easily operationalized.” This problem is compounded by the fact that scholars such as O’Donnell often “[use] the concept of ‘threat’ to refer to ‘perceived threat’ ” (Remmer and Merkx 1982: 10). How does one measure a real threat, let alone a perceived one? In this study, I use an operationalization of threat that is easily measured and that provides a powerful explanation of much of the variation that I seek to explain. To measure

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<sup>83</sup> See Frieden (1991: 143-177) and Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 75-83).

threat, I ask a simple question: *did the radical left actually take power in the country in question?*

While virtually all Latin American countries faced an insurgency or party of the radical left at some point between the 1960s and 1980s, in only a handful of cases did the radical left actually form a government. To put it differently, the “communists” were at the gates nearly everywhere at some point; in some countries, however, they managed to batter them down and take control of the kingdom. In the countries where the radical left actually formed a government, I argue that the perception of threat was of a far greater magnitude than in cases where the possibility of a leftist takeover remained merely hypothetical.

This operationalization of threat helps to explain variation in both of my “most similar” comparisons. With respect to the first pair, my measure would score Chile as having a higher level of threat than Argentina. This differs from O’Donnell’s (1979: 306) scores, which identify Chile in 1973 and Argentina in 1976, the years of democratic breakdown in each country, as having similar levels of threat. To be sure, the radical left was strong in both countries. In Chile, it was mainly expressed through parties, particularly those of the Popular Unity coalition that brought Salvador Allende to the presidency in 1970. In Argentina, it was mainly expressed through armed groups, especially the leftist Peronists known as the Montoneros and the Marxist People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP). Yet, while an armed radical left might seem more threatening than an electoral radical left, only in Chile did leftists actually take office. The result, as Silva (1999: 174) explains, was that the level of perceived threat was actually far greater in Chile than in neighboring countries:<sup>84</sup>

In contrast to those other southern cone countries, the threat in Chile came not only from certain groups of the population, but also from the government itself, which explicitly attempted to change the existing sociopolitical and economic order.

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<sup>84</sup> For similar arguments about why the level of threat was greater in Chile than in Argentina, see Linz and Stepan (1996: 224-225) and Munck (1998: 171, 273 fn. 3).

Furthermore, the threat to the economic elites was not merely the product of fear of possible damage to their interests; this had already occurred as a result of the expropriation of land, companies and banks. It was their very survival as a class and the existence of capitalism as a system that was at stake.

In Argentina, in contrast, the armed left managed to create a sense of anarchy and paralyze much of the country, but it never actually formed a government. It is true that there seemed to be a possibility of the radical left taking power after the victory of Peronist presidential candidate Héctor Cámpora in the March 1973 general election.<sup>85</sup> However, this possibility was quickly eliminated after Juan Perón returned to Argentina later that year—and from there, to the presidency—and immediately distanced himself from the Montoneros. During his second presidency, and particularly after his wife, Isabel, took over after his death in 1974, a wave of violence was unleashed against suspected leftists. No one accuses the presidential couple of having governed competently, but theirs was not a leftist government either.

With respect to the second pair, my operationalization of threat would score El Salvador as having a higher level of threat than Guatemala. In these cases, however, the relevant variation came *after* the end of the old regime. In both countries, military rule had been inaugurated decades earlier in response to short-lived reformist episodes,<sup>86</sup> and both countries faced powerful guerrilla insurgencies in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>87</sup> Yet, despite these

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<sup>85</sup> Cámpora and the Montoneros enjoyed a close relationship. After becoming president, he declared an amnesty for all captured guerrillas, and the Montoneros in turn pledged support for his government (Lewis 2002: 51). However, Perón forced him to resign as president less than two months after taking office. If he had remained in office, it is likely that his government would have appeared, in the eyes of Argentine elites, similar to the Allende government in Chile. His forced resignation and replacement by Perón, however, meant that rather than a government of the radical left coming to power, Argentina was thrust into a virtual civil war between leftist and rightist Peronists. A chaotic period followed, but the left did not actually take power.

<sup>86</sup> These were the government of Labor Party candidate Arturo Araujo in El Salvador (1931), and the “Ten Years of Spring” under left-leaning Presidents Juan José Arévalo and Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala (1944-1954).

<sup>87</sup> It is true that the Guatemalan guerrillas were never as numerous as their Salvadoran counterparts (Goodwin 2001). However, the possibility of them gaining a foothold among the country’s indigenous population, and thus combining class and communal conflict, should have made them seem particularly menacing (Slater 2010). According to Garrard-Burnett (2010: 38), this is precisely the situation that existed in Guatemala in the early

similarities, El Salvador and Guatemala parted ways significantly with the palace coups they experienced in 1979 and 1982, respectively. In El Salvador, the coup brought to power a self-described “Revolutionary Governing Junta.” This junta not only announced a number of far-reaching structural reforms, but also appointed prominent leftists as ministers, including several members of the Communist Party. The fact that this junta was also backed by the United States and was rumored to have links to the guerrillas made it all the more menacing in the eyes of Salvadoran elites.<sup>88</sup> In Guatemala, in contrast, the 1982 coup brought Ríos Montt to power. Instead of trying to drain support from the armed left by carrying out structural reforms, his government unleashed a wave of mass violence against suspected “subversives.” It is true, as I argued above, that Ríos Montt had conflicts with the private sector and alienated many elites with his proselytizing evangelical Protestantism, thereby preventing his authoritarian successor party (FRG) from becoming a conservative party. In no way, though, was his government viewed as a “communist” threat to the fatherland the way the Revolutionary Governing Junta was seen in El Salvador.

Finally, this operationalization of threat may help to explain the cases of Bolivia and Brazil, the other two countries that saw the formation of conservative authoritarian successor parties. In Bolivia, Hugo Banzer’s rise to power was preceded by the military government (1970-1971) of Juan José Torres, who was “the most radical and left-leaning

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1980s: “While residual racism and mutual distrust slowed the building of alliances between the guerrillas and the other popular movements, the horrifying prospect of such a coalition—Indians and communists united!—posed such a lethal threat to the civil-military regime that it demanded immediate action.”

<sup>88</sup> According to Johnson (1998: 129), there were actually multiple threats in El Salvador: the threat “from above,” which came from the Revolutionary Governing Junta; the threat “from below,” which came from the guerrillas; and the threat “from without,” which came from the United States’ support for the junta.

general ever to have governed Bolivia” (Klein 2011: 226).<sup>89</sup> During his short-lived administration, Torres replaced Congress with an appointed Popular Assembly that was composed “almost exclusively [of] labor syndicates and Marxist political parties” (Centellas 2007: 89), and supported “worker seizures of small mines and some Santa Cruz haciendas organized by the pro-Chinese Communist Party” (Klein 2011: 228). This was terrifying to Bolivian elites, and created “the sensation that Torres’ government was on the path toward ‘communism’ ” (Romero 2003: 25). This resulted in strong support for Banzer’s 1971 coup, and helped to create a lasting image of Banzer as a savior: “The positive judgment of Banzer is based on his coup d’état against Torres, which was applauded, since it put an end to a regime associated with chaos [and] communism... The comparison of the governments of Torres and Banzer constituted one of the main points to support the image of the founder of ADN as a leader capable of imposing order” (Romero 2003: 147). In Brazil, the military’s assumption of power was preceded by the government (1961-1964) of João Goulart, a former labor minister who “had openly fostered electoral alliances between the Communist Party and his own Brazilian Labor Party,” and whose “real and imagined association with the radical Left provoked a panic on the Right” (Bermeo 2003: 71). Collier and Collier (1991: 536) draw an explicit parallel between Brazilian elites’ view of Goulart and Chilean elites’ view of Allende,<sup>90</sup> and assert that “[t]here is no doubt that the perception of many social

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<sup>89</sup> Bolivia had been under military rule since 1964. In 1969, a new military ruler, General Alfredo Ovando, took power, and “opted to ape the reformist military government of General Velasco Alvarado in Peru” (Gamarra and Malloy 1995: 406). In October 1970, Ovando was forced out of office and was replaced by General Torres, his former chief of staff. During Torres’ short time as president (October 1970 to August 1971), he followed but also intensified the left-leaning policy agenda already initiated by Ovando. For descriptions of the Ovando and Torres governments, see Centellas (2007: 88-89) and Klein (2011: 226-228).

<sup>90</sup> Brazilian elites probably exaggerated the threat posed by Goulart, attributing to him a level of radicalism that, in truth, was not comparable to that of Allende. Collier and Collier (1991: 536) acknowledge this point when they write: “In Chile, it was unambiguously clear that a leftist president had come to power with the election of Allende, the candidate of a Marxist coalition. It was less clear in Brazil, where Goulart represented the



sectors in Brazil was that the left had come to power: Goulart did indeed provoke a wave of anti-communist sentiment and the fear of a Marxist dictatorship.” When Goulart announced a package of “Basic Reforms” in March 1964, which included land reform and the legalization of the Communist Party, this created widespread fear among Brazilian elites and helped to create popular support for the April 1964 coup against him (Stepan 1978).

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the theory of authoritarian inheritance, and argued that it was a key determinant of conservative party-building. Building on earlier arguments about why parties born with large endowments of “starting political capital” had a greater chance of success than parties with less starting political capital—a key insight of the literature on “mobilizing structures”—I highlighted one underappreciated source of such capital: authoritarian regimes. By providing authoritarian successor parties with key resources (brand, territorial organization, source of cohesion, clientelistic networks and business connections), I argued that, paradoxically, roots in dictatorship can sometimes be the key to democratic success. While authoritarian inheritance is not an exclusively conservative phenomenon, I argued that it was particularly useful for conservative parties, helping them to overcome the main challenge of conservative party-building: the construction of a

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[Brazilian Labor Party, or PTB], a nonideological party that had formally been in the governing coalition during most of the post-1945 period. Yet, Goulart belonged to the wing of the party that was identified with labor and that was undergoing a process of radicalization.” However, while “it is clear that in some ‘objective’ sense the ‘left’ as represented by Goulart was not equivalent to that represented by Allende...the move toward the left that did occur was significant to the point that Goulart was perceived as a Bolshevik threat who would establish a syndicalist state and unacceptably alter existing property relations” (Collier and Collier 1991: 509). For more on the parallels between Allende and Goulart, see Collier and Collier (1991: 509-510, 536-541).

multiclass coalition. Finally, I considered why conservative authoritarian successor parties emerged in some Latin American countries but not others, and argued that this could be understood in terms of the relative balance between authoritarian inheritance and authoritarian baggage. This, in turn, was the product of three antecedent conditions related to the previous authoritarian regime: the nature of the regime, the performance of the regime and the level of threat before or after the regime. In the remaining chapters, I demonstrate empirically how this theory of authoritarian inheritance can help to explain variation in conservative party-building in Latin America since the onset of the third wave.

## CHAPTER 3

### Chile's UDI: Origins of an Authoritarian Successor Party

On 5 October 1988, Chileans went to the polls to decide on an issue of tremendous consequence: should General Augusto Pinochet, the country's dictator since 1973, stay or go? It was the country's first meaningful election in fifteen years, and the answer that voters delivered was unequivocal: 56 percent voted "no" to a continuation of Pinochet's rule, against 44 percent who voted "yes." Pinochet grudgingly accepted this popular verdict, and a transition to democracy began. For many observers, this peaceful toppling of a dictator was inspiring. An editorial in *The New York Times* captured this well when it wrote that "Chileans have resoundingly affirmed their democratic traditions," and that in recent days the light of spring had not only "burst upon the magnificent Andean landscape," but also, "after 15 hard and bleak years, it has returned for the human spirit of Chile."<sup>1</sup> Yet, while it was clear that a solid majority of Chileans had voted against Pinochet, something else was also undeniable: a large minority of Chileans—44 percent of them—were apparently in no rush to see the "winter" of Pinochet's rule end. In like manner, two parties with close links to the former dictatorship—the Independent Democratic Union (UDI) and National Renewal (RN)—would go on to enjoy strong electoral performances after the transition to democracy. Over time, the UDI, the party most intimately linked to the military regime, would do especially well,<sup>2</sup> becoming an unambiguous case of successful party-building. It

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<sup>1</sup> See "In Chile: Positively No," *The New York Times*, 7 October 1988.

<sup>2</sup> RN actually outperformed the UDI in the 1989, 1993 and 1997 elections for Chamber of Deputies, but was overtaken by the UDI in 2001 and received less votes than the UDI in all subsequent lower-chamber elections. In this chapter and in Chapter 4, I occasionally discuss RN, but I focus primarily on the case of the UDI, for two reasons. First, the UDI is an unambiguously new party; in contrast, RN, as discussed below, is something

not only won more than 10 of the vote in five consecutive national legislative elections, but by 2001 it had also become the single most-voted-for party in Chile—a status it has held in all subsequent legislative elections. What explains the UDI's remarkable success?

In this chapter and in Chapter 4, I examine the emergence of the UDI and provide an explanation for its success. I demonstrate that the UDI was an authoritarian successor party, and argue that it succeeded because of authoritarian inheritance. In this chapter, I examine the origins of the UDI, showing that it had deep roots in the 1973-1990 dictatorship. The UDI was founded in September 1983 by high-level incumbents of the military regime, most notably Jaime Guzmán, the regime's most important political adviser and the “architect” of its 1980 constitution. The UDI was not the “official” party of the regime; in fact, its founders turned to party-building only after a factional shuffle marginalized them, temporarily, within the regime, making it an “inside-out” party. Nevertheless, UDI supporters were spread throughout the administrative apparatus, from the cabinet down to the municipal level. The UDI later became the preferred destination of ex-incumbents of the dictatorship, attracting mayors, ministers and even a member of the military junta itself. In the following chapter, I demonstrate that the UDI's status as an authoritarian successor party in no way prevented it from succeeding under democracy. On the contrary, I argue that the party's democratic success can be explained by the resources it inherited from the dictatorship. Although the UDI was burdened with a considerable

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of a hybrid between a resurrected traditional party and a new party. While both parties meet my definition of authoritarian successor party and were the beneficiaries of authoritarian inheritance, RN also benefited from resources it inherited from Chile's pre-1973 conservative parties. As such, it is difficult to determine whether RN's success was mainly the result of authoritarian inheritance or traditional party inheritance. In contrast, because the UDI had almost no links to Chile's traditional conservative parties, its success cannot be attributed to this alternative explanation. Second, while both the UDI and RN easily meet my definition of successful party-building, the UDI has, over the long run, been even more successful than RN. In order to maximize variation on the dependent variable of party-building success or failure, I therefore focus on the UDI, since it is one of the most clear-cut cases of successful conservative party-building in Latin America.

amount of “authoritarian baggage” because of the regime’s massive human rights violations, the party also inherited several valuable resources from the military regime, including a well-known and popular brand, clientelistic networks, territorial organization, business connections and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle.

This chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, I examine the decline of Chile’s traditional conservative parties. I argue that these parties had long been propped up by authoritarian practices, and that when democratizing reforms in the 1950s and 1960s undermined such practices, they dramatically weakened. As such, it was by no means inevitable that strong conservative parties would emerge at the end of military rule. In the second, third, fourth and fifth sections, I examine the rise of the *Movimiento Gremial*, the “embryo” of the UDI that emerged in Chile’s universities in the 1960s and played a key role in the 1973-1990 dictatorship. I examine, in particular, the *gremialistas*’ role in developing the military regime’s “foundational project” and their colonization of the regime’s policymaking and administrative apparatus. This colonization, I argue, would later help the UDI to benefit from authoritarian inheritance. In the sixth, seventh and eighth sections, I examine the formation of the UDI, and argue that it was born as an “inside-out” party. Following a severe regime crisis in 1982-1983, the *gremialistas* were temporarily marginalized within the regime. They responded by forming the UDI in order to prepare for a possible transition to democracy and to pressure the regime not to abandon its foundational project. I also examine the UDI’s self-definition as a “poor people’s party,” and discuss its efforts to build support in urban slums or *poblaciones*. Finally, I discuss the UDI’s early relationship to RN, and its role in the 1988-1990 transition to democracy. In the conclusion, I briefly note the parallels between the origins of the UDI and El Salvador’s ARENA, another “inside-out”

party, before turning to the impact of authoritarian inheritance on the UDI's success under democracy in Chapter 4.

### The Decline of Traditional Conservative Parties

During the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first several decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chile stood out for its relative political stability. In contrast to the institutional fluidity and violent changes of government that characterized much of Latin America, Chile had only two constitutions between 1833 and 1973 and a nearly unbroken record of civilian rule.<sup>3</sup> One explanation for the country's political stability sometimes given was the strength of its conservative parties. Unlike neighboring Argentina, whose propensity for coups during the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been linked to its lack of an electorally viable conservative party,<sup>4</sup> Chilean elites had access to powerful partisan vehicles of interest representation and thus lacked an incentive to knock on the barracks door. For more than a century, the two main parties that played this role were the Conservatives and the Liberals. These two parties—along with a third, the Radicals—emerged in the 1850s as a result of elite divisions over the role of the Catholic Church in the still-young Chilean republic.<sup>5</sup> The Conservatives were an explicitly confessional party,<sup>6</sup> while the Radicals represented the anticlerical pole and the

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<sup>3</sup> The main exception was the period of military rule under General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo from 1927-1931.

<sup>4</sup> See Di Tella (1971-1972), Smith (1978) and Gibson (1996).

<sup>5</sup> See Scully (1992: 20-61) and Correa (2011: 44-45). All of these parties were what Duverger (1964) called parties of “parliamentary origin” and Shefter (1994) called “internally mobilized.” In other words, they emerged first as parliamentary factions, and then expanded into electoral organizations. See Scully (1992: 221-222) and Remmer (1984: 87).

<sup>6</sup> In Scully's (1992: 39) words: “The newly formed Conservative party was clerical, largely aristocratic, and identified closely with the Catholic church. Its unacknowledged leader was the archbishop of Santiago, under

Liberals occupied a middle position. Despite serious differences on the religious question—differences that endured until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>—the Conservatives and Liberals both drew their core constituencies from the upper strata of society and favored similar economic policies.<sup>8</sup> These two conservative parties dominated Chilean politics from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1920s and remained influential actors until the 1960s. By providing elites with an electoral means of interest representation, they reduced the need for military intervention and thus contributed to Chile’s political stability.

Arguably, however, the kind of political stability to which the Conservatives and Liberals contributed was not *democratic* stability. Gibson (1996: 25-26, 30-34) believes that his theory about conservative parties promoting democratic stability applies to Chile. Yet, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that for most of the country’s history a very different relationship existed between conservative parties and regime type: rather than conservative parties propping up democracy, authoritarianism propped up conservative parties. While it is customary to describe Chile as one of the world’s oldest democracies, the term “hybrid regime” is in fact a more accurate description until, at the earliest, the late 1950s.

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whose guidance the party...vowed to fight against all state intervention in church affairs.” Church leaders actively intervened on behalf of the party, sometimes even using “church funds...to promote Conservative candidates.” See also Correa (2011: 47-56).

<sup>7</sup> The different levels of devotion to the Catholic Church resulted in different “lifestyles” (Correa 2011: 48) among Conservative and Liberal leaders. This could be seen, for example, in the universities attended by leaders of the two parties. In the early 1930s, 42 percent of Conservative party leaders had attended Chile’s Catholic University, while only 2 percent of Liberal leaders had done so (Correa 2011: 50).

<sup>8</sup> As Correa (2011: 47) explains: “In general terms, it can be said that both [Conservative and Liberals] represented above all large landowners, especially those that came from the nineteenth-century elite, from which, until the 1950s, all of their leaders came, with few exceptions” (Correa 2011: 47). If one compiles a list of Conservative and Liberal party leaders, one finds that it is comprised almost exclusively of “the surnames of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century ruling class.” Their similar core constituencies resulted in similar views on economic matters: “[T]he elements that united them were more important than those that separated them, since both Liberals and Conservatives represented the 19<sup>th</sup>-century elite and, in general, the property-owning sectors. Certainly, this translated into an agreement on basic issues, such as the defense of private property, the limitation of state attributions, the need to control the union movement and a strong anti-communism” (Correa 2011: 64).

In two major respects, Chile fell short of any reasonable minimum definition of democracy until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. First, suffrage was highly restricted. For much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the vote was restricted to literate male property-holders. In 1874, the property restriction was dropped, but illiterates did not gain this right until 1970<sup>9</sup> and various other means were used to restrict voter participation, such as the purging of Communist Party members from the electoral rolls in 1948 (see below). This protracted timeline of suffrage expansion put Chile significantly behind early democratizers like the United States, Britain and France.<sup>10</sup> It also made the country a laggard within Latin America itself: among Latin American countries in the early 1960s, Chile ranked fourteenth in electoral participation.<sup>11</sup> The country's first national election with universal suffrage—that is, its first fully democratic election—was the parliamentary election of March 1973.<sup>12</sup> The shrunken size of the Chilean electorate was not simply the result of slow franchise expansion; rather, the number of eligible voters increased *and* decreased in order to meet the needs of traditional parties. In 1912, for example, the size of the electorate was reduced by a

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<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, some landlords appear to have taught their peasants basic literacy in order to make them eligible to vote for their preferred party. As Valenzuela (1977: 207) explains: “The Conservatives...drew most of their support from rural areas in the center of the nation where landlords were famous for taking their followers to the polls after teaching them to write in order to meet the literacy requirements” (Valenzuela 1977: 207).

<sup>10</sup> According to Remmer (1984: 82-83): “[T]he electorate remained quite restricted by the standards of most other liberal democracies. Whereas the percentage of the population voting in countries such as Britain, France, and the United States regularly reached figures in the 10 to 25 percent range during the 1900-1925 period, in Chile the rate of electoral participation [during this period] was typically around 5 percent.” See also Loveman (2001: 164-165).

<sup>11</sup> See Valenzuela (1978: 25).

<sup>12</sup> As Bermeo (2003: 143) explains in her critique of one classic work: “Sartori, like many others, seems to assume that Chileans enjoyed universal suffrage throughout the period of his concern. He writes, for example, that Allende was elected by universal suffrage in 1970. This is incorrect. Though the law on universal suffrage was passed (by the Christian Democrats) before Allende came to power, it did not come into effect until after Allende was elected. Chileans did not enjoy the right to universal suffrage until the municipal elections of 1971, and it was not until 1973 that Chile's legislative elections were open to all Chileans eighteen and over.”



whopping two-thirds in an attempt to combat the growing electoral strength of the left.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in 1948, the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy, better known as the “Accursed Law” (*Ley Maldita*), not only made the Communist Party illegal but also purged 30,000 suspected Communist supporters from the electoral rolls.<sup>14</sup> For most of its history, then, Chile’s franchise restrictions—and arbitrary changes to the electorate—meant that it shared more in common with Dahl’s (1971) notion of “competitive oligarchy” than with full democracy.<sup>15</sup> The intentional exclusion of large numbers of potential voters was one of the authoritarian tools that helped to keep conservative parties afloat—and, in the process, to keep Chile’s “democratic” institutions safe for Chilean elites.

The second way that authoritarianism propped up Chile’s conservative parties was through the absence of free and fair elections in the countryside. From the colonial period until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Chile was overwhelmingly rural, and the countryside was dominated by large agricultural estates known as *fundos*. Social relations on these estates were “semifeudal” and “dominated by rural oligarchs” (Scully 1992: 68). While politics in the cities was a hard-fought and competitive affair, “[t]he structure of power within the *fundo* was self-contained, highly authoritarian, and removed from the struggles and conflicts of urban life” (Scully 1992: 122). According to Kaufman (1972: 9), the rural world “was essentially

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<sup>13</sup> See Scully (1992: 66-67). Interestingly, the Conservative Party was an early proponent of suffrage expansion, believing that it would benefit from an increase in rural voters (Scully 1992: 51-52; Valenzuela 1996: 232-233). With the rise of leftist parties in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Conservatives and other traditional parties reversed course: “[W]hereas during the last quarter of the nineteenth century traditional party elites had sought gradually to expand suffrage to new social actors, by the second decade of the twentieth century they had concluded that there was less to lose by restricting electoral mobilization before it got out of hand” (Scully 1992: 66-67).

<sup>14</sup> See Loveman (2001: 200).

<sup>15</sup> Other authors concur with this assessment. For example, Valenzuela (1977: 171) describes Chile for most of its history as an “oligarchic democracy,” while McGuire (1995a: 516, fn. 88) describes it as a “proto-democracy.”

one of private power. Here the landlord, rather than the government, was the final authority, and it was to him, rather than to the state, that the rural worker owed his loyalty.” Under such stratified conditions, landowners were able to use a combination of vote buying and coercion to control the votes of the *inquilinos* (peasants) living on their estates, channeling them to conservative parties. This “political hegemony in the countryside” was the “sine qua non of the traditional parties’ electoral strength” (Scully 1992: 124).<sup>16</sup> Beginning in the 1930s, the Conservatives and Liberals lost their position of absolute dominance in the Chilean political system. However, there was a “tacit political agreement” between the conservative parties and the new Popular Front government of Radicals, Socialists and Communists, in which the former agreed to tolerate limited reforms in urban areas in exchange for an assurance from the latter not to carry out similar reforms in the countryside.<sup>17</sup> This control of the peasant vote, combined with an electoral formula that overrepresented rural districts,<sup>18</sup> made Congress “the main source of political power for the right,” where it could “negotiate and neutralize any reform that deeply affected its interests” (Correa 2011: 119-120). The upshot is that, in addition to benefitting from a restricted electorate, conservative parties were kept artificially strong by landlords’ coercive control of the peasant vote. This was not a situation of electorally strong conservative parties

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<sup>16</sup> A substantial literature has examined the hierarchical conditions in Chile’s *fundos* and their impact on the electoral strength of the country’s conservative parties. See, for example, Correa (2011: 77-97); Kaufman (1972); Loveman (1976, 2001: 201-202); Remmer (1984: 106); and Zeitlin and Ratcliff (1988: 190-195).

<sup>17</sup> See Scully (1992: 100), Loveman (2001: 201-202) and Valenzuela (1978: 25-26).

<sup>18</sup> See Correa (2011: 95) and Remmer (1984: 71-72).

contributing to democratic stability à la Gibson; on the contrary, it was a case of subnational authoritarianism contributing to the electoral strength of conservative parties.<sup>19</sup>

In the late 1950s, the authoritarian pillars of conservative party strength began to break down in response to a series of democratizing reforms. Ironically, the initiator of these reforms was Carlos Ibáñez del Campo, a former military dictator (1927-1931) who successfully returned to the presidency via elections in 1952 with an anti-system, “populist” appeal.<sup>20</sup> In 1958, Ibáñez pushed through a package of reforms that revolutionized the way that elections were conducted in Chile, the most important of which was the introduction of the “Australian ballot.”<sup>21</sup> Previously, parties had printed and distributed their own ballots (*cédulas*); voters then took a ballot representing a particular party to the polls, which made it easy for party goons to monitor votes. Under the new system, the government printed a single ballot (*cédula única*) with a list of all parties or candidates, from which voters would choose in the privacy of the voting booth.<sup>22</sup> This method of voting, which today is the norm in countries that hold elections, was a novelty for Chile and had a powerful democratizing impact. As Loveman (2001: 222-223) explains: “A public [Australian] ballot meant that landowners could no longer effectively control the votes of rural workers through distribution of party ballots and monitoring of the polls to assure that workers voted

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<sup>19</sup> For more on the concept of subnational authoritarianism, see Gibson (2012). Curiously, while Gibson has been at the forefront of the study of both conservative parties and subnational authoritarianism, he appears not to have observed the important connections between the two concepts in the context of Chile.

<sup>20</sup> See Grugel (1992).

<sup>21</sup> Another important electoral reform by Ibáñez was the re-legalization of the Communist Party, which had been made illegal in 1948 under the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy (Loveman 2001: 217, 220).

<sup>22</sup> See Valenzuela (1996: 242-243) and Scully (1992: 134).

‘correctly.’<sup>23</sup> Additional reforms over the next twelve years furthered democratization by increasing penalties for vote buying and fraud; enfranchising illiterates; and making registration and voting mandatory for all adults.<sup>24</sup> The result was that Chile underwent a regime transition: in a little over a decade, it went from being a hybrid regime with a shrunken electorate and pockets of subnational authoritarianism to a full democracy with universal suffrage and free and fair elections across the national territory. If this interpretation of Chile’s regime history clashes with frequent claims about the country’s long democratic tradition, it is worth noting that it was also the interpretation of UDI founder Jaime Guzmán. Citing the centrality of suffrage restrictions and vote buying in the maintenance of political stability, and the role of suffrage expansion and the Australian ballot in creating a fully democratic regime,<sup>25</sup> Guzmán (2008: 130) asserted: “If we are talking about serious democracy and full suffrage, in 1973 [when the coup against Allende occurred] it was not a democracy with 150 years of tradition that was interrupted, but rather a 15-year-old democracy whose existence was marked by permanent instability and precariousness.”

This transition to democracy meant that the country’s conservative parties could no longer draw on authoritarian tools to prop themselves up artificially; for the first time ever, they would have to compete for the votes of all Chileans under truly democratic conditions. The result of democratization was a dramatic weakening of Chile’s traditional conservative

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<sup>23</sup> For a sophisticated analysis of how the introduction of the Australian ballot undermined landlords’ ability to control peasants’ voting behavior, see Baland and Robinson (2008, 2012).

<sup>24</sup> For a description of the various reforms that took place between 1958 and 1970, see Correa (2011: 256), Grugel (1992: 183), Loveman (2001: 222-223), Scully (1992: 107, 134) and Valenzuela (1978: 25-26).

<sup>25</sup> See Guzmán (2008: 115-116, 129-130).

parties.<sup>26</sup> The captive vote of peasants had been the cornerstone of these parties' electoral support; as soon as this vote was liberated, they ceased to be fully competitive. Added to this difficulty was the Catholic Church's abandonment of the Conservative Party—a party that had self-defined as “the party of the Catholic Church” (Scully 1992: 114-115) for a century—in favor of the newly formed Christian Democratic Party.<sup>27</sup> The magnitude of the difficulties facing Chile's conservative parties became apparent in March 1964 during a congressional by-election in Curicó, “one of the strongholds of the landowning class and of the Conservative and Liberal parties” (Power 2002: 74). Expecting their candidate to win, they were shocked by the surprise victory the Socialist Party candidate.<sup>28</sup> Since they had viewed the election as a sort of “plebiscite” in the lead-up to the September 1964 presidential election, the results were interpreted as a “catastrophe for the right” (Correa 2011: 289). Fearing that the Socialist candidate, Salvador Allende, would win in the upcoming presidential election, they withdrew their own candidate and threw their support to the Christian Democrats, despite the Christian Democrats' distinctly non-rightist program of “Communitarian Socialism” (Scully 1992: 148).<sup>29</sup> The Christian Democratic candidate, Eduardo Frei Montalva, responded to this unsolicited support “with disdain... asserting that

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<sup>26</sup> This argument about the dramatic weakening of Chile's traditional conservative parties is shared by the UDI itself: “Thirty-five years ago [1964], the traditional right, composed of the Conservative and Liberal parties, was on the verge of being electorally devastated” (UDI 1999: 5). See also Durruty (1999: 15-22).

<sup>27</sup> The Christian Democratic Party was created in 1957 following a series of schisms in the Conservative Party. For accounts of the rise of the Christian Democrats and the Catholic Church's abandonment of the Conservative Party, see Correa (2011: 129-167), Loveman (2001: 230-237) and Scully (1992: 106-180).

<sup>28</sup> The winning Socialist candidate was named Oscar Naranjo, leading observers to describe the event as the *Naranjazo*. See Correa (2011: 287-288, 309), Power (2002: 73-74), Scully (1992: 154) and Valdivia (2008a: 54-55).

<sup>29</sup> As Correa (2011: 292) puts it: “[T]he right ended up giving its unconditional support to Frei in the presidential elections of 1964, despite his proposal to undertake profound structural reforms. The right had no option but to choose between two revolutions.”

he would not change a line of his program even if they offered him a million votes” (Correa 2011: 289). Partially due to the support of the conservative parties, Frei went on to beat Allende in 1964 by a wide margin. The Conservative and Liberal parties, however, were in disarray. In the March 1965 parliamentary elections, they won a combined total of only 12.5 percent—a whopping 20 points less than what they had received in 1957, the last congressional election before the introduction of the Ibáñez reforms. For Chile’s traditional conservative parties, this abysmal result was truly a “mortal blow” (Correa 2011: 308).

In 1966, the Conservatives and Liberals attempted to stem the electoral bleeding by merging into a single entity, the National Party.<sup>30</sup> This attempt was partially successful, with the new party winning 20.0 percent and 21.3 percent in the 1969 and 1973 parliamentary elections, respectively.<sup>31</sup> However, this was considerably less than the historical vote share of the Conservative and Liberal parties, and it put the National Party well behind both the left and the Christian Democrats. In addition to being relatively weak electorally, the National Party differed from the country’s traditional conservative parties in its ideology and style. The patrician leaders of the traditional conservative parties, who considered politics a gentleman’s sport and were “ardent defenders” (Correa 2011: 64) of Chile’s nominally democratic regime,<sup>32</sup> began to be replaced by a new breed of rightist leader. Many of these new leaders came from nationalist groups gathered under the National Action party label, which had been invited to participate in the formation of the National Party. Previously marginal in Chilean politics, some of these nationalist groups had admired Nazism and the

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<sup>30</sup> For a detailed history of the National Party, see Valdivia (2008a). For an analysis of the party’s ideology, see Pollack (1999: 26-30), as well as Soto and Fernández (2002).

<sup>31</sup> See Valenzuela (1978: 6).

<sup>32</sup> See also Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 286).

Franco regime in Spain.<sup>33</sup> Under their influence, the National Party became more pro-military and ambivalent about liberal democracy than the traditional conservative parties had been.<sup>34</sup> It viewed the armed forces as “the main moral reserve of the nation” and thought that their proper role was that of “sustainers and defenders of the institutional order”; the party also advocated a new form of “organic democracy” (Valdivia 2008a: 112) based on corporatist principles. As polarization increased under Frei—and reached fever pitch after Allende became president in 1970—the party began to call openly for a coup. When the coup finally came in September 1973, the National Party, apparently resigned to the notion that the right could not compete under truly democratic conditions, announced its dissolution and offered its unconditional support to the new military authorities.<sup>35</sup>

To summarize, by the time the military dictatorship was installed, the Chilean right had undergone a quantitative and qualitative metamorphosis. Quantitatively, Chile’s conservative parties had discovered that they were much less competitive under full democracy and, accordingly, saw their vote share plummet. Qualitatively, the Chilean right had grown increasingly undemocratic and willing to turn to the military for assistance. In these two respects, the Chilean right came to bear a resemblance—one that is not generally appreciated—to the Argentine right, which also suffered a precipitous decline and turned to

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<sup>33</sup> For useful descriptions of these nationalist groups, see Correa (2011: 57-60), Pollack (1999: 36-38) and Valdivia (2008a: 85-86).

<sup>34</sup> According to Valdivia (2008a: 87), the traditional right “saw itself as democratic, anti-dictatorial, rather parliamentarist, flexible and anti-militarist.” This posture began to change, however, among both politicians and supporters: “The disloyal rightist ranks would swell considerably as time went by, drawing individuals not only from the wealthy economic groups but also from middle-class and military sectors” (Valenzuela 1978: 46).

<sup>35</sup> Although the military authorities eventually ordered the dissolution of all parties, the National Party dissolved itself without prompting. In the words of one important rightist leader, the party was “more papist than the Pope” (Allamand 1999: 49), opting to dissolve itself a full four years before this was legally required. For an analysis of the National Party’s self-dissolution, see Valdivia (2006a). As a result of this decision to dissolve itself, “the Right virtually ceased to exist organizationally” (Barrett 2000: 9).

non-electoral alternatives after the introduction of democratizing reforms (see Chapter 5).<sup>36</sup>

In light of this decline of Chile's traditional conservative parties, it was by no means inevitable that strong conservative parties would emerge in Chile at the end of military rule. Even less foreseeable was the emergence of a partisan right whose electoral support would approach that of the center-left coalition that governed Chile from 1990 to 2010.<sup>37</sup> Yet this is precisely what occurred. Chile gave rise to not one, but two, electorally successful conservative parties: the UDI and RN. It is true that RN drew, in part, on the legacy of Chile's traditional right, thus making it something of a hybrid between a resurrected

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<sup>36</sup> In Argentina, an electorally strong conservative party, the National Autonomist Party (PAN), assured political stability in the country from the 1870s to the 1910s (see Chapter 5). The problem was that the elections that the PAN systematically "won" were marred by blatant fraud. When clean elections and universal suffrage were introduced in 1912 through a package of reforms known as "Sáenz Peña Law," the PAN quickly collapsed. While elections in Chile were never as dirty as those in Argentina (Remmer 1984: 106), Chile's conservative parties, as described above, nevertheless depended on the tools of authoritarianism to remain electorally viable. When they lost access to those tools in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of the Ibáñez reforms and subsequent reforms, these parties, like Argentina's PAN, dramatically weakened. Thus, as McGuire (1995: 238) observes: "In their impact on the conservative rural elite, the Chilean electoral reforms of the late 1950s [Ibáñez reforms] are not without parallels to the Argentine reforms of 1912 [Sáenz Peña Law]." Though separated by several decades, the response of elite actors in both Argentina and Chile to the new challenge of free and fair elections was nearly identical: they abandoned any pretense of support for liberal democracy and turned to the military as their savior. Given this parallel trajectory with the Argentine right, some feared that the Chilean right would become permanently "argentinized." Writing a few years before the transition to democracy, Valenzuela and Valenzuela (1986: 208) expressed this concern when they mused: "Though the right-wing parties have not maintained their organic unity, many of their programs and policies have been implemented, to their satisfaction, by the military. But many leaders of the right worry that the disbanding of political organizations is a serious matter, reducing the right's ability to present a coherent and unified electoral appeal when a democratic opening takes place... By identifying so closely with a government that eschews politics and condemns parties, they have provided no space for a rightist democratic option to the regime. This in Chile presents a serious problem for a democratic future. Without a rightist electoral organization, the Chilean party system runs the risk of becoming 'argentinized,' with an organizationally weak right...turning to nonelectoral means and military assistance in order to advance its interests."

<sup>37</sup> After the transition to democracy, the two main electoral blocs were the center-left *Concertación* and the *Alianza*, which was composed of the UDI and RN. The *Concertación* won a greater percentage of the vote than the *Alianza* in the 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001 and 2005 elections for the Chamber of Deputies, ranging from a high margin of victory of 18.6 points in 1993 to a low of only 3.6 points in 2001. Despite these repeated electoral losses, the *Alianza* was always relatively competitive. In the 2009 election for the Chamber of Deputies, the *Alianza* finally beat the *Concertación*, winning by a slim margin of 0.9 points. See Siavelis (2013: 206).



traditional party—the National Party—and a new party.<sup>38</sup> The UDI, in contrast, was totally new. It was not the resurrection of one of Chile’s traditional conservative parties; instead, it was an original political force with a new set of leaders, a new set of principles, a new set of resources and a new set of voters.<sup>39</sup> In the remainder of this chapter, I examine the origins of the UDI, highlighting its roots in the 1973-1990 military regime.

### The *Movimiento Gremial*: The Embryo of the UDI

In the mid-1960s, while Chile’s traditional conservative parties were in the process of collapsing, the embryo of a future conservative party was emerging in civil society in the form of the *Movimiento Gremial*.<sup>40</sup> This movement first emerged in the mid-1960s in the Law School of the prestigious Catholic University in the capital city of Santiago. Its founder was a brilliant, highly religious and very conservative young law student named Jaime Guzmán.<sup>41</sup> Guzmán, who came from an upper-class if not a wealthy family,<sup>42</sup> had shown an interest in

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<sup>38</sup> On the continuities between RN and PN, see Valenzuela and Scully (1997: 514) and Pollack (1999: 5). The participation of some RN founders in the dictatorship, and thus the reasons for classifying RN as an authoritarian successor party, will be discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

<sup>39</sup> This is in contrast to Middlebrook (2000b: 28), who argues that variation in conservative party-building in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s is “largely explained by the prior strength or weakness of conservative political organizations.” In his view, “there is a significant association between conservative political forces’ prior strength or weakness and conservative parties’ electoral performance following the instauration or restoration of democratic politics” (Middlebrook 2000b: 50), citing Chile as an example of this claim.

<sup>40</sup> The words “*gremial*” or “*gremialista*” are derived from the Spanish word “*gremio*.” “*Gremio*” literally means “guild,” but the term can be used more broadly to describe any form of association. The term, and its relationship to the *Movimiento Gremial*, will be explained in greater detail below.

<sup>41</sup> No good biography of Jaime Guzmán exists, but many authors have chronicled aspects of his life. This paragraph draws on Huneeus (2007: 228-231), Moncada (2006: 23-27) and Valdivia (2008a: 134-139). For a detailed examination of Guzmán’s political thought, see Cristi (2000).

<sup>42</sup> In Valdivia’s (2008a: 134) words: “Jaime Guzmán came from a long-established conservative family, which was intermixed with the history of the country. In [the family’s] past there were presidents of the republic and

politics from a young age. While in secondary school, he had been a member of the youth wing of the Conservative Party, and he was an enthusiastic admirer of the Franco regime in Spain. Having been raised in a devoutly Catholic home, his true dream, though, was to become a priest. Throughout his life, he wrote extensively on issues related to Christianity and the Catholic Church.<sup>43</sup> Yet the Catholicism with which Guzmán so strongly identified was not the “progressive” Catholicism then sweeping much of the region, but rather the more traditionalist and conservative variety. In university, he joined “an extremely right-wing Catholic movement” that “was highly critical of the Second Vatican Council and the Chilean church” (Huneus 2007: 229-230). His early dreams of becoming a priest notwithstanding, Guzmán got swept up in university politics during the turbulent 1960s. At the time, the influence of university politics on national life greatly exceeded the actual power of student governments.<sup>44</sup> This gave Guzmán a public stage from which to propagate his ideas, and over time to become an increasingly well-known public figure.

The backdrop of Guzmán’s entry into university politics and his decision to create the *Movimiento Gremial* was the rise of Christian Democracy in Chile. The Christian Democratic Party was formed in 1957 by dissident factions of the Conservative Party under the influence of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church.<sup>45</sup> It experienced astronomical

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numerous members of parliament, as well as high-level members of the Church... In addition, because of family connections, he was linked to prominent examples of the economic right.”

<sup>43</sup> For a collection of some of these writings, see Guzmán (2003).

<sup>44</sup> As Huneus (2007: 231) explains: “Traditionally, university politics have always been very important in Chile. Student federation elections have always been followed by the press, and student leaders’ positions on national issues are taken into consideration by the media and are influential in parties. Many well-known politicians’ careers began in the student movement.”

<sup>45</sup> For accounts of the formation of the Christian Democratic Party, see Correa (2011: 129-167), Fleet (1985) and Scully (1992: 106-180).

growth, seeing its vote share rise from 9.4 percent in 1957 to 42.3 percent in 1965.<sup>46</sup> While the Christian Democrats were a “centrist” party in a spatial sense, the party’s program was actually fairly radical. Campaigning under the slogan of “Revolution in Liberty” in the 1964 election, the party “criticized the evils of capitalism and materialistic socialism, offering in their stead a vaguely defined ‘communitarian’ society or Christian socialism” (Loveman 2001: 230). While Eduardo Frei won the 1964 election in part because of the support he received from the country’s declining conservative parties, his was in no way a rightist government. Indeed, he sought nothing less than “to alter dramatically the very foundations of Chilean society, to redistribute income and wealth, to improve the living standards of, and to broaden opportunities for, the nation’s workers and peasants, and to democratize the country’s political and social life” (Loveman 2001: 237). Frei’s program included two of Chilean politics’ biggest taboos: land reform and rural unionization. Tearing up the gentleman’s agreement that had prevented past governments from attempting reforms in the countryside, in 1967 he won the approval of legislation granting the state vast new powers to expropriate and redistribute land, and that legalized rural labor unions for the first time.<sup>47</sup> These legal reforms were accompanied by an active rural unionization drive,<sup>48</sup> part of a more general effort to mobilize previously unorganized groups, such as women and urban slum-dwellers (*pobladores*).<sup>49</sup> These reforms resulted in a sharp and lasting gulf between Christian Democrats and the right in Chile. In Scully’s (1992: 166) words: “Christian Democratic

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<sup>46</sup> See Valenzuela (1978: 35).

<sup>47</sup> For detailed accounts of these reforms, see Kaufman (1972) and Loveman (1976).

<sup>48</sup> The results were dramatic: while there were only 1,658 members of rural unions in 1964 when Frei took office, by the time he left office in 1970 this number had soared to 136,984 (Valenzuela 1978: 30).

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of the Christian Democrats’ attempt to mobilize *pobladores* and women, see Scully (1992: 147-148, 160-165), Oxhorn (1995: 50-55) and Power (2002: 99-125).

policies during [the Frei presidency], especially in the rural sector, so traumatized the right that any understanding with this reformist center party became unthinkable.”<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, the battle between Christian Democrats and the right at the national level was being played out on the smaller stage of the Catholic University. In 1959, the student branch of the Christian Democrats won, for the first time, elections for the Catholic University Student Federation (FEUC). Traditionally, the Catholic University had been the most important institution of higher learning for the children of Chilean elites,<sup>51</sup> particularly those with a strong Catholic identity. As a university, it had a reputation for scholarly excellence and professionalism, not student radicalism. Reflecting broader changes in the Chilean Catholic Church and in society more generally, the new Christian Democrat-controlled FEUC believed that it was time to construct a new kind of Catholic University: “Until then, student activities were limited to the organization of parties, trips, university weeks and music festivals. The [FEUC] proposed bringing the university closer to the processes of change that were occurring in the country, in which university students were called to undertake an important role” (Valdivia 2008a: 144). In their view, the university should not be an ivory tower, but instead should “have a greater presence in the national community, supporting popular movements and initiatives to create a more just social order” (Valdivia 2008a: 144). They also advocated the “democratization” of the university, which, among other changes, would include elections for university authorities and a greater role for student representatives in university decision-making (Valdivia 2008a: 144). Over time, the

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<sup>50</sup> The one exception was the short-lived Democratic Confederation (CODE), a coalition of the Christian Democrats and the National Party formed in opposition to the Popular Unity government during the 1972-1973 period. See Valenzuela (1978: 83-85), Scully (1992: 167-169) and Bermeo (2003: 162, 172, 176).

<sup>51</sup> A survey from 1964 showed that 70.4 percent of Catholic University students could be classified as either “upper class” or “upper-middle class”; at the University of Chile, the country’s other elite university, the figure was only 39.2 percent (Valdivia 2008a: 142).

university's Christian Democrats grew increasingly extreme in both their demands and their tactics. As Huneeus (2000: 475) explains: "[I]n the Catholic University the Christian Democrats underwent a leftist radicalization as a result of the party's youth section...moving to a radical leftist position that incorporated Marxist and even Leninist concepts." On 11 August 1967, after organizing a plebiscite to have the university president removed from his post, the Christian Democrat-controlled FEUC organized the forcible takeover (*toma*) of the university's main administrative building (*Casa Central*) as part of an effort to demand further progressive and democratizing reforms in the university.

This increasing student radicalism in the context of a historically non-radical university was what prompted Jaime Guzmán to create the *Movimiento Gremial*.<sup>52</sup> For Guzmán and his followers, who were known as "*gremialistas*," the changes that the Christian Democrats were attempting to realize at the Catholic University were deeply upsetting. In their view, there was a place for politics, but university was not that place. As Guzmán (2008: 45) later wrote, they believed in "a university for studying and not for doing politics." Rather than trying to organize campus insurrections and overthrow university presidents, they thought that "the mission of students consist[ed] in collaborating with authority, in a serene and constructive form, conscious of the principles of respect and hierarchy and removed from all pressure, stridency or demagogy."<sup>53</sup> The *gremialistas* were particularly dismayed by the penetration of political parties into university life, which had reached unprecedented levels since the rise of the Christian Democrats in the late 1950s. Many

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<sup>52</sup> An important background conditions for the *gremialistas*' rise was the collapse of Chile's traditional conservative parties. While the National Party helped the right to recoup some of its losses at the national level, it failed to make inroads into student politics, creating a "political vacuum on the Right" (Huneeus 2000: 474).

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Valdivia (2008a: 148).

students at the Catholic University agreed with the *gremialistas*' vision of a traditional and depoliticized university. The group won a string of student elections soon after its formation, beginning with the law school in 1965 and then the economics department in 1967.<sup>54</sup> In 1968, following the controversial takeover of the university's main administrative building, the *gremialistas* were able to exploit opposition to this move,<sup>55</sup> as well as divisions between moderate and radical Christian Democrats,<sup>56</sup> in order to win control of the biggest prize of all, the FEUC, as well as several other student associations. Thereafter, the *gremialistas* were able to maintain uninterrupted control of the FEUC until the mid-1980s, via elections until the 1973 coup and then via appointment by the military authorities.

Underlying this movement was the philosophy of "*gremialismo*," whose potential relevance extended far beyond university politics. The word "*gremio*" reflected in the movement's name, which in Spanish literally means "guild" but can be used more broadly for any group or association, indicates the philosophy's main concern. The point of departure of *gremialismo* is the importance of "intermediate societies," defined as all groups "greater than the family but smaller than the state" (Guzmán 2008: 46). According to

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<sup>54</sup> The first *gremialista* president of the law school's student government was Manuel Bezanilla, who won the 1965 election. In 1966, the *gremialistas* won the law school elections again, this time with Jaime Guzmán as their candidate. In 1967, Guzmán ran for the FEUC presidency; though he lost, he won a substantial portion of the vote and helped to publicize the aims of the *Movimiento Gremial*. In 1968, the *gremialista* candidate, Ernesto Illanes, was more successful, winning control of the FEUC. See Huneeus (2007: 231-232).

<sup>55</sup> According to Pollack (1997: 153): "The August 1967 student occupation of the Catholic University marked the single most important turning point for the *gremialista* movement during this period. The Christian Democrat-dominated *Federación Estudiantil de la Universidad Católica* (FEUC) organized the occupation in protest at the university's reactionary position vis-à-vis Frei's educational reform program. The *gremialistas* thus made their mark as the most vociferous opponents of the FEUC position. Their campaign against the occupation, together with their populist antiparty line, enabled the *gremialistas* to win the FEUC presidency for the first time in October 1968. This enabled the movement to garner campus-wide support, extending its web of influence far beyond the myopic and privileged ivory towers of the law faculty."

<sup>56</sup> As Huneeus (2007: 232) explains: "Internal conflicts in the PDC helped the Gremialista movement in the FEUC elections in 1968... [They] defeated the '11 August' movement, a coalition of well-known, left-leaning PDC youth, which had opted for a maximalist discourse foreign to the students' low level of politicization."

*gremialistas*, human beings form such groups in order to realize goals that cannot be achieved by individuals alone. It is essential that these groups be given full “social autonomy” to carry out the “specific purpose” for which they were created (Guzmán 2008: 48). Following the well-known “principle of subsidiarity,” higher-order groups—particularly the state—should never attempt to usurp the functions of lower-order groups (Guzmán 2008: 49). In their view, the main difference between a “free society” and a “totalitarian society” is the degree of autonomy enjoyed by such groups: “[T]otalitarianism does not recognize any autonomy for intermediate societies, which function as mere bureaucratic appendices of the state apparatus, which control and manipulate their functioning” (Guzmán 2008: 51). One important type of intermediate society is the political party, which individuals create in order to contest state power. The *gremialistas* recognized parties as legitimate tools for pursuing specifically political ends; however, they were deeply opposed to any attempt by parties to penetrate and “instrumentalize” organizations whose specific ends were, in their view, non-political, such as labor unions, business associations, student groups and universities (Guzmán 2008: 52).<sup>57</sup> As Guzmán himself admitted, this philosophy was not particularly original, nor was it secular in nature.<sup>58</sup> Instead, as Pollack (1999: 31) explains: “Its origins lie in the most integrationist versions of social Catholic thought, in particular the French and Spanish traditionalists of the nineteenth century.” Not surprisingly, then, the *gremialistas* also tended to be extremely devout Catholics, albeit with a strong distaste for the “progressive” variety of Catholicism associated with the Christian Democrats.

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<sup>57</sup> Arguably, the *gremialistas*’ concern about political parties’ penetration of civil society was well founded. Indeed, Coppedge (1994: 175) describes Chile at the time as a clear example of “partyarchy,” with “Chilean parties politiciz[ing] and penetrat[ing] society just as thoroughly as parties did in Venezuela.”

<sup>58</sup> In Guzmán’s (2008: 46) words: “I want to make clear that I do not in any way claim that the thinking that inspires *gremialismo* to be fully new. It goes back to the most classic exponents of Christian-inspired philosophy.”

In light of these views about the overreach of the state, the politicization of intermediate societies and the desirability of traditionalist Catholicism, the election of Salvador Allende to the presidency was a cause for panic for the *gremialistas* and the right more generally. In the September 1970 presidential election, Allende eked out a small plurality with 36.2 percent of the vote.<sup>59</sup> As the candidate of the Popular Unity (UP) coalition of the Socialist Party, Communist Party and several small leftist parties, Allende's victory was significant, "not only because it represented the first free election of a Marxist head of government firmly committed to a fundamental transformation of his country's existing socioeconomic order, but also because of the new government's promise to institute its revolutionary transformations in accord with Chilean constitutional and legal precepts" (Valenzuela 1978: 42).<sup>60</sup> Many doubted that it was possible to reconcile the twin goals of socialist revolution and constitutional democracy. Indeed, Allende's own Socialist Party, which had grown increasingly radical over the years, declared openly at its 1967 party congress that "peaceful or legal forms of struggle...do not lead by themselves to power. The Socialist Party considers them to be limited instruments of action, incorporated into the political process that carries us to armed struggle."<sup>61</sup> More moderate elements of the UP, including the Communist Party and Allende himself, disagreed, believing that it was possible to realize a wholesale socialist transformation of Chilean society in a peaceful and

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<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, Allende won a smaller percentage of the vote in 1970 than in 1964, when he won 38.9 percent. The difference between the two elections is that in 1964, the right supported the Christian Democratic candidate; in 1970, however, it backed the independent candidacy of Jorge Alessandri, with the Christian Democrats again running their own candidate. With the votes of the center and the right divided in 1970, Allende managed to win the election, despite a drop in the percentage of the electorate supporting him (Valenzuela 1978: 33-41).

<sup>60</sup> Although the term "Marxist" was used during the military dictatorship sloppily and often inaccurately to describe all regime opponents, this was the term that Allende used to describe himself (Muñoz 2008: 103).

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Roberts (1998: 92).



constitutional manner.<sup>62</sup> Regardless, the ascension of Allende to the presidency was a cause for alarm for the right. The Christian Democratic government of Eduardo Frei, whose reforms had made it “crypto-communist” (Valdivia 2008b: 218), was bad enough; a government led by actual Marxists, some of whom were openly contemptuous of the Chilean constitution and the very concept of liberal democracy, was terrifying.

The next three years were the most polarizing in Chilean history, with much of society engaged in what Landsberger and McDaniel (1976) describe as “hypermobilization.” While political mobilization had already reached new levels during the Frei presidency, it reached fever pitch after 1970: “The breadth of mobilization under Allende was unparalleled in Chilean history. Chileans from all classes, including citizens who had never engaged in any sort of protest activity before, took their politics into highly visible arenas” (Bermeo 2003: 153). On the left, Popular Unity (UP) supporters took to the streets to protest against what they viewed as national and international conspiracies to destabilize the government. Many also engaged in wildcat strikes and unauthorized seizures of factories and farms, believing that with a “*compañero presidente*” in office their actions would receive *post facto* legal approval.<sup>63</sup> On the right, opponents of the government used a variety of tactics to resist what they considered to be an attempt to impose Marxist totalitarianism on Chilean soil. Their tactics included protest marches, such as the massive demonstration by women in December 1971 known as the “March of the Empty Pots and Pans”; strikes, such as the

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<sup>62</sup> However, even among the more moderate sectors of the UP, it is not clear whether they viewed democracy as intrinsically valuable and thus worth preserving indefinitely, or whether they believed that democratic institutions would wither away as socialism advanced. As Valenzuela (1978: 47) writes: “The Communists, and, to a degree, Allende himself, argued that eventually the process would lead to the creation of new institutions and procedures. Fundamental transformation would be political as well as socioeconomic. Indeed, even on the question of the future viability of traditional electoral procedures, the Communists were hesitant.”

<sup>63</sup> For a fascinating historical account of one of the most important unauthorized factory seizures during the Allende presidency, see Winn (1986).

crippling nationwide truckers' strike in October 1972; and, in the case of the paramilitary group known as Fatherland and Liberty (*Patria y Libertad*), outright terrorism.<sup>64</sup> The *gremialistas* played a prominent role in this struggle.<sup>65</sup> According to Guzmán (2008: 63), they viewed themselves as “the vanguard of the struggle against the Popular Unity,” and they used their control of the FEUC to convert the Catholic University into “a symbol and bastion of liberty and anti-Marxism.” Thus, for example, they helped to coordinate the 1972 truckers' strike, and even let a group of striking miners take refuge on the university's campus for several weeks.<sup>66</sup> Guzmán also wrote op-eds and frequently appeared on television and the radio, where he used his sharp intellect to criticize the UP's policies in harsh terms. In the process, he grew into a nationally prominent figure and well-known public intellectual, raising his own profile and that of the movement he led.

Thus, by the time that the military carried out its September 1973 coup, the *gremialistas* had made a name for themselves. They dominated student politics at the Catholic University in Santiago, and had managed to gain a foothold in several other universities in

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<sup>64</sup> See Bermeo (2003: 153-159), Power (2002: 144-156) and Valenzuela (1978: 58, 78-80).

<sup>65</sup> By this time, the *Movimiento Gremial* had become an important presence in several universities throughout Chile, not just Santiago's Catholic University, and had also forged ties with other sectors opposed to the UP. As Pollack (1997: 153) explains: “Their oppositional activities during the Allende Popular Unity government ensured that their realm of influence far exceeded their origins as a student-based movement. The FEUC, headed in 1973 by the *gremialista* Javier Leturia, transformed the Catholic University into the symbol and bastion of right-wing opposition to the Allende government. In an attempt to qualify their overtly political opposition to the administration, the *gremialistas* strove to situate it within a specific student context. Yet their support for striking miners, providing them with safe houses within the university campus, and their mobilization of the first national demonstration against the government, revealed the extent to which they were prepared to go in securing its defeat... By the time of the 1972 insurrectional strike, the *gremialistas* had become the principal mass organizer, mobilizing the middle and various popular sectors in opposition to the government.”

<sup>66</sup> According to Guzmán (2008: 63), they allowed the university's “main administrative building [*Casa Central*] to house the *El Teniente* miners who took refuge in it for several weeks... And it was also one of the places where the brave standard-bearers that led this combat on other fronts often gathered. Union leaders, businessmen and professions, met there, as in so many other places in Chile, in order to join forces in that memorable struggle for national liberation.” See also Huneus (2007: 234) and Pollack (1999: 153).

the country. Moreover, they had played a highly visible role in the struggle against the Allende government. The reputation that they had earned during the anti-UP struggle, and the high level of human capital that they possessed as university-educated elites, made them attractive as both advisers and administrative personnel in the new military regime.

### The *Gremialistas* and the Foundational Project of Military Rule

When the military launched its coup d'état against the Allende government on 11 September 1973, it knew exactly what it was against. According to the new military authorities, they felt that they had a “moral duty” to intervene, given the “anarchy, stifling of liberties, moral and economic chaos,” and “absolute irresponsibility and incapacity” of the Popular Unity government, which had “led the country to ruin.”<sup>67</sup> As such, their objective would be to put a stop to this grave situation and to “reestablish normal economic and social conditions in the country, with peace, tranquility, and security for all.” In their diagnosis of the country’s immediate problems and justification of intervention, they had the support of all major rightist groups—and even, initially, most Christian Democrats.<sup>68</sup> After three years of relentless mobilization and counter-mobilization, an economy spinning out of control and the fear of many Chileans that the Popular Unity government planned to create a “second Cuba,” there was a consensus among these groups that military intervention was necessary. Accordingly, they did not object as the new military authorities dismantled the country’s

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<sup>67</sup> See “The Reasons of the Junta,” 11 September 1973, reprinted in Loveman and Davies (1997: 181-183).

<sup>68</sup> Indeed, three weeks before the coup, a majority of the Chamber of Deputies had “declared that the government had engaged in unconstitutional behavior, and called on the military to ‘place an immediate end’ to the state of affairs” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 29). In its initial statements and documents, “the junta repeatedly sought to justify the coup by referring to [this] nonbinding resolution adopted by the Chamber of Deputies on August 22, 1973” (Valenzuela 1995: 27).

existing democratic institutions and unleashed a wave of repression against its perceived enemies that was “exceptional even on a continent accustomed to violence and unconstitutional seizures of power” (Valenzuela 1995: 22). In short order, Congress was shuttered, leftist parties were made illegal, other parties were declared to be in indefinite “recess,” elected local governments were dissolved, strict censorship was put into effect, and mass arrests were undertaken, accompanied by large-scale torture, executions and “disappearances.”<sup>69</sup> In place of the old democratic regime, a new junta composed of the heads of the country’s four branches of the armed forces (army, navy, air force and *Carabineros* [police]) claimed for itself absolute executive, legislative and constituent power.

Yet, while the military and rightist groups agreed about what needed to be stopped, there was no such consensus about what should follow. Or, to borrow Garretón’s (1986: 146) terms, there was a broad agreement about the *reactive* phase of authoritarianism, which is “characterized by pure repression and makes use of the necessity of war and the need to restore order after a period of ‘chaos and anarchy’ as a legitimizing principle”; however, there was no such consensus about the *foundational* phase, which involves a “comprehensive attempt to reorganize society.” Beyond its goal of restoring order and extirpating the “Marxist cancer,” the military lacked a detailed economic and political program. As General Gustavo Leigh, one of the original junta members, later admitted, they had “no program, no plans, nothing.”<sup>70</sup> Moreover, given that the military did not have a long history of direct intervention in Chilean politics, it lacked experience in non-military administration. In order

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<sup>69</sup> For a description of the regime’s human rights abuses, see the Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, also known as the “Rettig Report,” published in 1991 (translated into English in 1993). See also Constable and Valenzuela (1991); Loveman (2001: 261-307); and Huneeus (2007).

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Valenzuela (1995: 26).

to compensate for its programmatic and administrative deficiencies, the junta reached out to likeminded civilians for assistance, issuing a public invitation to “high-level technicians...to collaborate for the benefit of the fatherland, leaving aside their political tendencies.”<sup>71</sup> As discussed below, one of the groups that responded to this invitation was the *Movimiento Gremial*. Thus, while military officers occupied the bulk of cabinet posts during the early years of the dictatorship,<sup>72</sup> from the beginning, civilians also played an important role in the regime as advisers and administrators.

Although virtually all of the civilians who responded to the invitation to participate in the military regime were broadly located on the right of the ideological spectrum, they were a diverse bunch with conflicting ideas about possible “foundational” projects for the regime.<sup>73</sup> Despite the Chilean dictatorship’s reputation for internal unity, it was in fact rent by “bitter internecine battles” (Valenzuela 1995: 45) among identifiable regime factions, with two main axes of conflict. The first was political. Here the division was between “hardliners” (*duros*), who were in favor of creating a permanent authoritarian regime, and “softliners” (*blandos*), who were in favor of a gradual transition to partial democracy. The most important softliners in the regime were the *gremialistas*. To be sure, they were enthusiastic supporters of the use of violent repression, and thus were anything but “soft”

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<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 80).

<sup>72</sup> See Huneeus (2007: 199-202).

<sup>73</sup> Indeed, one initial support group, the Christian Democrats, was not in favor *any* fundamental redesign of Chilean institutions. Instead, they “expected a brief interlude and then elections which would allow ex-President Frei to assume again the executive office” (Loveman 2001: 267). By 1974, when it became clear that the military had no intention of quickly giving up power, the Christian Democrats joined the opposition. See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 282) and Pollack (1999: 52-53).

with respect to the reactive phase of authoritarianism.<sup>74</sup> In debates about the regime's *foundational* project, however, they were considered softliners.<sup>75</sup> Although they opposed a quick return to democracy, the *gremialistas* were not in favor of permanent authoritarianism, either. Instead, they supported authoritarian “institutionalization,” to be followed, eventually, by partial democratization. This process would involve the creation of “a juridical structure that justified the authoritarian use of power, through a new constitution that established the decisionmaking bodies and envisioned a new political order that would eventually rule the country once the military left power: a so-called protected and authoritarian democracy” (Huneus 2007: 140). This *gremialista* vision clashed with that of hardliners, such as members of the disbanded paramilitary group Fatherland and Liberty (*Patria y Libertad*), “who wanted the regime and Pinochet as its leader to stay in power indefinitely” (Huneus 2007: 89).<sup>76</sup> These factions became bitter rivals, with Guzmán publicly denouncing the hardliners as

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<sup>74</sup> This is dramatically illustrated in a memorandum to the new junta written by Guzmán a few days after the coup, in which he urges the new authorities not to hold back in the use of force: “The success of the Junta is directly linked to its harshness and decisiveness, which the country expects and applauds. Any complexes or hesitance in this purpose would be disastrous. The country knows that it is dealing with a dictatorship and it accepts that. It only demands that it rule with justice and without arbitrariness... Turning the dictatorship into a ‘dictablanda’ [soft dictatorship] would be an error with unforeseeable consequences. It is precisely what Marxism is waiting for, in the shadows” (quoted in Huneus 2007: 38).

<sup>75</sup> This goes against contemporary intuitions about the UDI, which is widely—and correctly—considered to be the party that has remained most loyal to the military regime’s eventual legacy. However, in comparison to some other regime factions, the *gremialistas*’ advocacy of an eventual transition to protected democracy made them “softliners.” See, for example, Durruty (1999: 46); Hipsher (1996: 20); Huneus (2007: 89-90); and Valenzuela (1995: 41-46). Even Andrés Allamand (1999: 37), one of the founders of National Renewal (RN), and by all accounts one of the most moderate of Chile’s right-wing politicians, describes the *gremialistas* as softliners: “There were basically two currents and visions that confronted each other. The ‘*blandos*’ (the *gremialistas* and the more technocratic civilians) and the ‘*duros*’ (different nationalist groups).”

<sup>76</sup> This was somewhat ironic, since Guzmán had actually belonged to the “political council” of *Patria y Libertad* from 1970 to 1972 (Huneus 2007: 230). For more on the regime hardliners, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 82, 287-288); Huneus (2007: 179-224); and Valenzuela (1995: 42-50).

“fascists,” and the hardliners, who were well represented among the secret police, spying on the *gremialistas*.<sup>77</sup>

The second major axis that divided regime factions with respect to the military’s “foundational” project was economic policy. By all accounts, the Chilean economy in 1973 was in a tailspin, with hyperinflation, shortages of basic goods and massive government deficits.<sup>78</sup> From the beginning, the new military junta was firmly committed to reversing the bulk of Allende’s economic reforms and implementing some sort of stabilization package. Beyond that, however, they were “not yet committed to an economic policy” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 169). As in the case of the political dimension of the regime’s foundational project, two major visions competed for primacy.<sup>79</sup> The first was advocated by the so-called “Chicago Boys,” most of whom had either studied economics at the University of Chicago or been educated in Chile by Chicago-trained economists.<sup>80</sup> These neoliberal technocrats advocated the wholesale restructuring of the Chilean economy according to free-market principles, which would include large-scale privatization, trade liberalization, and a strict control of the money supply. In contrast, the competing vision for the economy, which was shared by Christian Democratic supporters of the regime, many businessmen and much of

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<sup>77</sup> See Huneus (2007: 360, 241).

<sup>78</sup> The economic crisis that occurred at the end of the Allende government has been extensively documented. See, for example, Valenzuela (1978: 50-80); Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 167); Loveman (2001: 249-260); and Power (2002). For a classic analysis of the causes of the crisis, see Dornbusch and Edwards (1990).

<sup>79</sup> For an account of these competing visions, see Silva (1996: 65-136).

<sup>80</sup> For a detailed account of the role of the “Chicago Boys” in Chile’s military regime, see Valdés (1995). However, as Huneus (2000: 478-479) notes, the term “Chicago Boys” is a partial misnomer, since many of the most important economic policymakers in the regime, despite sharing a general “Chicago” outlook, had actually earned their post-graduate degrees at institutions other than the University of Chicago. Prominent examples include Jorge Cauas, Hernán Büchi and José Piñera.

the military establishment,<sup>81</sup> essentially favored a return to the *status quo ante*. These individuals “opposed Allende’s policies but wanted to retain a strong interventionist state,” in part because they believed that “national security required public control of major economic assets” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 169). As in the case of the political hardliners and softliners, these competing economic factions became bitter adversaries.

The eventual winners of these intra-regime disputes were the *gremialistas* and the Chicago Boys, which became, respectively, the dictatorship’s “political team” and “economic team” (Huneus 2000: 461). The ideas of the *gremialistas* provided the political dimension of the regime’s foundational project in the form of the constitution of 1980, which described a regime of “protected democracy.”<sup>82</sup> This was to be a hybrid regime. On the one hand, the constitution contained the formal trappings of democracy, including an elected president and bicameral legislature. On the other, it contained several provisions that Garretón (2003) famously described as “authoritarian enclaves.” Notable examples included a military-dominated tutelary body called the National Security Council with broad powers; a Senate partially composed of non-elected members, several of whom were appointed by the National Security Council; extremely stringent conditions for constitutional reform; and a ban on all Marxist parties.<sup>83</sup> While the constitution did not delineate an electoral formula,

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<sup>81</sup> For a discussion of the process by which the Chilean military went from favoring a statist economy to a neoliberal one, see Valdivia (2003).

<sup>82</sup> The new constitution was approved in a plebiscite in 1980. However, the 1980 plebiscite is widely believed to have been unfair. As Barros (2002: 172) explains: “The adoption of the constitution was accompanied by a plebiscite, but the legitimacy of this act was impugned by the Center and Left opposition since the plebiscite took place amidst a state of emergency, with all political parties outlawed, no alternatives presented to voters, no statement of the juridical consequences of a defeat, and, most significantly for the opposition, no voter registration rolls, and no independent electoral oversight or counting.” Even Durruty (1999: 67), who is generally sympathetic to the Chilean right, admits that there was an “air of intimidation” during the plebiscite. For a detailed analysis of the unfairness of the 1980 plebiscite, see Fuentes (2013).

<sup>83</sup> For descriptions of the provisions of the 1980 constitution, see Loveman (2001: 290-291), Barros (2002: 169), Huneus (2007: 160-161) and Siavelis (2008: 191-192).



the military later introduced a formula known as the “binomial system” via an organic law in the late 1980s shortly before the transition to democracy.<sup>84</sup> This electoral system, which was tailor-made to overrepresent the right and was very difficult to change, has been described as an additional “authoritarian enclave” (Siavelis 2008: 205). These new political institutions, which limited the power of elected leaders and guaranteed a permanent role for the armed forces in political life, “were designed looking backwards” (Barros 2002: 226). As Barros (2002: 227) puts it: “The imprint of the Allende experience upon the process of institutional design...cannot be overstated.” In order to ensure that this “trauma” (Barros 2002: 227) was never repeated, the 1980 constitution attempted to create a system in which this would be impossible. To be sure, this new political regime would be more democratic than a military dictatorship, but it would also be more authoritarian than a full-fledged democracy.

It is important to note that the bulk of the 1980 constitution did *not* go into effect in 1980. The term “1980 constitution” is in fact somewhat misleading. It is more accurate to describe it as a medium-term legal justification for the continuation of military rule, combined with a roadmap for an eventual transition to protected democracy. As Barros (2002: 169) explains: “This mode of dictatorial stabilization through constitutionalization was achieved by combining permanent articles and transitory articles in the constitution. In effect, the 1980 constitution contained two constitutions in one.” The first constitution, which was contained in the “permanent” articles, laid out the system of protected democracy described above, but would not go into effect immediately. The second constitution, which was contained in the “transitory” articles, “reinstated the status quo of the dictatorship” (Barros 2002: 169), and went into effect immediately. Pinochet would continue as president,

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<sup>84</sup> On the binomial system, see Magar et al. (1998) and Pastor (2004).

parties would remain illegal and the military would continue to rule with nearly absolute power.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, these powers were meant to be “transitory.” In theory, they were supposed to remain in effect for no more than eight years, at which time the regime was obliged to hold a plebiscite on whether the candidate of the military junta should continue for a second eight-year term. It was only after the plebiscite was held—and, crucially, *regardless of who won*—that the permanent articles of the constitution would go into effect.<sup>86</sup> Despite the supposed inevitability of a transition to protected democracy, it is important to note that “the permanent body of the 1980 constitution [was] largely nominal and declarative: The normative framework of a civilian regime and the steps leading up to it stood only as ‘promises’—and not very credible ones” (Barros 2002: 171). Indeed, it seems doubtful that Pinochet was ever really committed to the constitution’s provisions, viewing it mainly as a useful smokescreen for prolonging his rule.<sup>87</sup> As we will see, though, the

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<sup>85</sup> Indeed, if anything, these transitory articles actually “expanded the general’s [Pinochet’s] powers through 1989, freeing him to declare states of emergency and impose drastic curbs on individual rights” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 137).

<sup>86</sup> Barros (2002: 170) explains these two scenarios: “Although the constitution left open the possibility of a second presidential term for Pinochet—if nominated by the Junta and approved in a ratifying plebiscite [...]—regardless of the outcome of the presidential plebiscite, the constitution structured a process whereby in March 1990 military rule would end, the Junta would cease to exist, and an elected, civilian Congress would be inaugurated. [The transitory articles] anticipated two alternate paths to full implementation of the constitution, with the outcome of the plebiscite triggering which path would be followed. If the citizenry approved the Junta’s candidate, then the president-elect would assume office and the constitution would go into full effect, except that the Junta would continue operating until the inauguration of an elected Congress one year into the presidential term. General elections for deputies and senators were to be convoked nine months after the president... If the Junta’s candidate was defeated, as eventually happened in 1988, the incumbent’s (Pinochet’s) term would be extended one year, and ninety days before the end of this extension competitive presidential and congressional elections would be convoked, subject to the permanent provisions of the constitution... In this case, as well, the Junta would function until Congress opened.”

<sup>87</sup> This became clear following Pinochet’s defeat in the 5 October 1988 plebiscite on the continuation of his rule (see below), when the general reportedly sought to overturn the results. According to declassified U.S. documents, Pinochet told other his advisers, “I’m not leaving, no matter what,” and planned to use the armed forces to take control of the capital. He was ultimately prevented from doing so due to the opposition of other military commanders. See “Pinochet Tried Defying Defeat, Papers Show,” *The New York Times*, 23 February 2013, and “Chile’s Gen Pinochet ‘tried to cling to power’ in 1988,” *BBC*, 24 February 2013.

*gremialistas*—and later, the party they formed, the UDI—*were* committed to it. Indeed, they were arguably the only true believers in the political dimension of the regime’s foundational project, and would do everything in their power to see that it was faithfully implemented.

If the political dimension of the regime’s foundational project was protected democracy, the economic dimension was neoliberalism. During the first two years of military rule (1973-1975), the regime’s approach to the economy was rather cautious. While many of Allende’s socialist reforms were rolled back, the move toward a more capitalist economy was undertaken in a “gradualist” and piecemeal manner.<sup>88</sup> When this approach failed to reactivate the economy, the regime’s leaders decided to follow the Chicago Boys’ recommendations for “shock therapy.” The members of the junta were apparently impressed by their “scientific expertise and nonpartisan approach,” and by the sense that they were “motivated by a higher interest in the common good” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 171). This was especially true for Pinochet, who was “intrigued by the Chicago Boys’ self-described ‘revolutionary’ aims to transform the economy and break with the orthodoxies of the past. The general yearned to be identified with a historic act of national renewal, and he decided these bold technocrats held the key to a new, prosperous future that would forever distinguish his rule” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 171). And so it was that in April 1975, the junta opted to change course on economic policy and adopt what Silva (1996: 97) calls “radical neoliberalism”: “Over the next two and a half years...policy shifted dramatically as Chile inaugurated the first phase of a radical neoliberal economic restructuring program. The new policy measures included drastic deflation, swift privatization of state owned companies, rapid deregulation of markets (especially in the

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<sup>88</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 168-170); Silva (1996: 65-94); and Loveman (2001: 268).

financial sector), and deep and fast reductions in protectionism.” In addition to these macroeconomic changes, the regime attempted to apply market principles to huge swaths of the public sector, privatizing much of the education, health and pension systems, and also drastically cutting social spending. It was hoped that these reforms would fundamentally remake Chilean society, ushering in a new era of “popular capitalism” (Huneus 2007: 313), in which Chileans would become more prosperous and self-reliant, and less tempted by the ever-present dangers of “populism” and “demagoguery.” In this way, neoliberalism became the regime’s recipe for transforming Chilean society and reactivating the economy. Combined with protected democracy, it was a key element in the dictatorship’s foundational project.

The two groups most responsible for the formulation of the military regime’s foundational project—the *gremialistas* and the Chicago Boys—became increasingly intertwined over time. This process of “mutual ideological insemination” (Pollack 1999: 41) had actually begun years earlier at the Catholic University, where the two groups came into frequent contact with one another, and there was in fact considerable overlap in terms of membership.<sup>89</sup> It was during the dictatorship, though, that ideological fusion reached full fruition. Prior to their participation in government, the *gremialistas* had largely “[lacked] a defined economic philosophy” (Pollack 1999: 67). However, as they worked alongside their neoliberal colleagues in the military regime, they began to absorb their ideas, finding in the Chicago Boys’ advocacy of a minimalist state a practical application of “the anti-interventionism and the depoliticizing elements of the initial *gremialista* project” (Pollack

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<sup>89</sup> Huneus (2000: 462) goes so far as to assert that they “were not, in fact, two separate groups, working independently... A large number of the economists were either supporters, or active members, of the Gremialist Movement founded by [Jaime] Guzmán in the Catholic University after the electoral failure of the right in the 1965 elections.” Of particular importance was Miguel Kast, who “acted as a bridge between the two groups, since he was both an economist and a well-known gremialist” (Huneus 2000: 464).

1999: 66).<sup>90</sup> The Chicago Boys, in turn, took from the *gremialistas* a moral justification for a set of economic policies that, until then, had been defended primarily in technical terms.<sup>91</sup> This “*gremialista*-Chicago Boys alliance” (Pollack 1999: 50) would not only provide the military regime its foundational project, but also, as will be described below, eventually create the UDI in order to defend this project from opponents of the regime—and from rival factions within the regime itself. Before examining the birth of the UDI, however, it is necessary to consider how the *gremialistas* colonized the administrative apparatus of the regime, since this would provide the future party access to a number of valuable resources that would help it to flourish after the transition to democracy.

### The *Gremialistas*’ Colonization of the Administrative Apparatus

It is impossible to understand the rise of the UDI without first examining the *gremialistas*’ colonization of the administrative apparatus of the military regime. As discussed above, when the military seized power in September 1973, it lacked both a foundational project and an adequate pool of administrative personnel. The *gremialistas* helped to solve both of these problems. First, the movement’s leader, Jaime Guzmán, who was by now a professor in the Law School of the Catholic University, played a key role in the design of what would become the political dimension of the regime’s foundational project. Guzmán,

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<sup>90</sup> According to Valenzuela (1995: 45): “While serving the regime...Guzmán underwent an important philosophical transformation. He shed his long-held Thomistic views in favor of [Friedrich] von Hayek’s vision of society. Guzmán now believed that free-market economics could modernize Chilean politics and make parties and ideologies a thing of the past, obviating the need for corporatist solutions.”

<sup>91</sup> See Pollack (1999: 50).

who has been described as the chief “ideologue” of the military regime,<sup>92</sup> exercised influence through both formal and informal channels. The most important formal channel was his seat on the commission tasked with drafting a new constitution, known as the Ortúzar Commission (after its president, Enrique Ortúzar).<sup>93</sup> Despite the commission’s name Guzmán was its most influential member, and succeeded in “pushing for a form of ‘protected’ democracy and resisting pressures for an early transition to democratic rule or for a permanent authoritarian formula for the country’s future governance” (Valenzuela 1995: 45). As such, he is often described as the “architect” of the 1980 constitution.<sup>94</sup>

Perhaps even more important than his formal participation in the constitutional commission was his informal influence as a political adviser. Initially, Guzmán was invited to serve as an adviser to General Gustavo Leigh, the head of the air force and the man that many predicted, wrongly, would become “the future strongman of the regime” (Moncada 2006: 73). Guzmán shifted his attention to General Augusto Pinochet, however, once it became clear that the army chief would become the regime’s dominant figure.<sup>95</sup> Guzmán’s influence increased rapidly. Indeed, he was “most influential civilian adviser during the first years of the regime...enjoy[ing] direct access to the president [Pinochet] and advis[ing] him on most important political and governmental initiatives” (Valenzuela 1995: 45).<sup>96</sup> He also

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<sup>92</sup> See, for example, Angell (2007: 36, 154).

<sup>93</sup> For a detailed account of the commission’s work and subsequent steps in the writing of the 1980 constitution, see Huneeus (2007: 151-162)

<sup>94</sup> See Pastor (2004: 47) and Posner (2004: 74). See also Pollack (1999: 76) and Huneeus (2001a: 20).

<sup>95</sup> Initially, the military had planned to rule in a “collegial” manner, with the leadership of the junta rotating among the four heads of the armed forces. Pinochet, however, shrewdly managed to outmaneuver rival military leaders to become the regime’s *de facto*, and later *de jure*, strongman. See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 64-89) and Valenzuela (1995: 27). Nevertheless, as Barros (2002) demonstrates, the regime was not truly “personalist,” since Pinochet never had absolute power over the other leaders of the armed forces.

<sup>96</sup> See also Huneeus (2007: 226) and Moncada (2003: 73).

became “the main speechwriter for Pinochet, which allowed him to influence and define the political thought of the regime” (Huneus 2001a: 17). In this capacity, Guzmán helped to draft several of the regime’s most important public statements, including the March 1974 “Declaration of Principles” and the July 1977 “Chacarillas Speech,” in which the junta announced, for the first time, the broad outlines of its plan for a protracted transition to protected democracy.<sup>97</sup> In both his formal role on the Ortúzar Commission and his informal role as an adviser and speechwriter, then, Guzmán became one of the civilian heavyweights of the dictatorship.

Yet the role of the *gremialistas* was not limited to institutional design. They also played a key role in the execution of policy, progressively colonizing much of the administrative apparatus of the military regime. While the Chilean dictatorship never established an “official” party, the *gremialistas* served as a sort of “functional equivalent” (Huneus 2007: 226).<sup>98</sup> As Huneus (2007: 226) explains: “Guzmán’s movement fulfilled some of the functions of a single party, especially when it came to recruiting the elite and mobilizing the population in noncompetitive elections.” The *gremialistas* possessed several qualities that made them an attractive source of bureaucratic personnel for the new regime. First, they had played a prominent role in the anti-Allende struggle, which made them

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<sup>97</sup> See Barros (2002: 205), Moncada (2006: 29) and Huneus (2007: 239).

<sup>98</sup> According to Valenzuela (1995: 61), Pinochet’s decision not to create a political party was based on political calculations: “Chile remained an exclusionary bureaucratic-authoritarian regime, even though many political advisers wanted Pinochet to create a massive political party in support of his presidency, arguing that it was the only way to break the monopoly that traditional parties held over civilian political loyalties... Pinochet’s refusal to support a mobilization strategy helped him to maintain military obedience and neutrality, which might have been threatened had the president followed the populist route of Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina or Juan Velasco Alvarado in Peru.” See also Huneus (2007: 225-226).

credible allies of the new regime in the eyes of the military authorities.<sup>99</sup> Second, because the *Movimiento Gremial* had emerged in the world of student politics, virtually all of its members were university-educated professionals and, as such, possessed the skills and training necessary for administration. Finally, while the *gremialistas* were an unambiguously right-wing movement, they were *not* associated with the country's traditional conservative parties.<sup>100</sup> This was important, given that “[o]ne of the principal political characteristics of the Chilean military regime that came to power in September 1973 was its profound antipathy toward the country's political parties” (Barrett 2000: 4).<sup>101</sup> While parties of the left—and later also the Christian Democrats—were the main victims of the military's anti-party animus, the new authorities were also contemptuous of the “*señores políticos*” who had led Chile's traditional conservative parties.<sup>102</sup> These politicians were accused of the same sins of “demagogy” and “politicking” (*politiquería*) as all politicians and, as such, were seen as having contributed to the country's descent into political and economic chaos. For all of these reasons, the *gremialistas* were an ideal source of administrators for the new regime.

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<sup>99</sup> According to Moncada (2006: 73), “[t]he Junta called Guzmán because he was the public face of the opposition to Allende.”

<sup>100</sup> Although Guzmán had belonged to the youth wing of the Conservative Party while in secondary school, he did not join the National Party when it was formed in 1966 (Guzmán 2008: 119). As Huneeus (2007: 230) explains: “Guzmán did not identify with traditional right-wing parties. He thought they had become infected by the same defects that had infected all parties, and that they were not strong enough to defend their principles against the PDC and the left.”

<sup>101</sup> See also Loveman (2001: 266).

<sup>102</sup> As Valenzuela (1995: 29) explains: “Although Christian Democrats and National Party members, along with leaders of the business federations, had led the political opposition to the Allende regime, the military commanders soon made it clear that they intended to put considerable distance between themselves and the ‘traditional’ party and interest group elites.” While some National Party leaders—and also, initially, right-wing Christian Democrats—were given positions in local government and some ambassadorships, few traditional politicians were invited to play a role in national policymaking or administration during the first decade of military rule.



This combination of qualities, together with Guzmán's influence with the junta, allowed the *gremialistas* to extend their presence to virtually every level of the military regime. The first and most obvious level was the cabinet.<sup>103</sup> In his study of cabinets during the military regime, Huneeus (2007: 199-204) identifies seven distinct "governments." The first (1973-1974) and second (1974-1978) governments were composed primarily of military officers. The third, however, which took power in April 1978 as part of the regime's move toward "institutionalization," was mainly civilian in composition. Consistent with the regime's adoption of a foundational project based on neoliberalism and an eventual transition to protected democracy, "[i]n this new government, civilians held the majority of posts, particularly the Chicago Boys and the Gremialistas" (Huneeus 2007: 202). The most important figure in this new government was the minister of interior, Sergio Fernández, who became the *de facto* "head of cabinet" (Huneeus 2007: 196).<sup>104</sup> Though Fernández was not a member of *Movimiento Gremial* himself, Guzmán saw him as a valuable potential ally, and used his influence with the junta to get Fernández appointed.<sup>105</sup> The two men, who would later create the UDI, worked closely together and divided labor between them: while Guzmán "worked behind the scenes, Fernández became one of the most visible leaders of the military regime" (Valenzuela 1995: 45). The *gremialistas'* influence waned in the fourth government (1983-1985), which took power in the midst of an economic and political crisis

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<sup>103</sup> Somewhat surprisingly, Guzmán himself never became a minister. According to Huneeus (2007: 212), this was a conscious decision: "The regime's main figures were not all ministers. Some very influential figures held no cabinet post, among them Jaime Guzmán, who preferred to work through the ministers he trusted and had no interest in being a minister himself, because he desired independence from Pinochet to pursue his own interests: building a movement that would later become a hegemonic force, once the military had returned to its barracks... In order to do so, Guzmán had to direct the activities of many Gremialista activists who held different posts in the government, which required that he maintain his independence."

<sup>104</sup> Cristi and Ruiz-Tagle (2006: 214) cite Fernández an example of a "*primus inter pares* minister."

<sup>105</sup> See Pinto (2006: 78) and Huneeus (2007: 196). See also Fernández (1994: 10).

(discussed below). In the fifth (1985-1987), sixth (1987-1988) and seventh (1988-1990) governments, however, their influence rebounded, with Fernández resuming his role as minister of the interior in 1987. The upshot is that the *gremialistas* had a major presence at the cabinet level throughout the period of military rule. Indeed, they “participated heavily in each of [the] seven governments of the military regime, except the first (which was all-military), with their presence peaking in the third government” (Huneus 2007: 207).<sup>106</sup>

A second important part of the administrative apparatus where the *gremialistas* had a large presence was the Organization of National Planning (ODEPLAN). ODEPLAN was a state agency created in 1967 by the Christian Democratic government of Eduardo Frei, with the task of advising the president “on all matters connected with the process of economic and social planning.”<sup>107</sup> It would become the most important agency for the design and implementation of economic and social policy during the military regime.<sup>108</sup> ODEPLAN officials prepared many of the most iconic policy reforms of the dictatorship, such as the privatization of the pension and health care systems, as well as the use of targeted social spending to combat extreme poverty. The *gremialistas* took control of this powerful agency almost immediately after the coup. Particularly important in this process was Miguel Kast, a personal friend of Jaime Guzmán who was both a *gremialista* student leader and a prominent

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<sup>106</sup> According to Huneus (2007: 207), “[t]he Gremialistas held a total of twenty-six ministries. They were surpassed by the Chicago Boys, who held thirty-one, and the army, who held forty-six.”

<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Huneus (2000: 485). Huneus (2000: 485) describes ODEPLAN’s mission as follows: “As part of its mission to propose fundamental directions for the planning process, which included the national development plan, ODEPLAN was expected to co-ordinate the necessary studies and to establish the economic and social evaluation criteria for projects financed directly or indirectly by the state, and to promote and organize the training in planning techniques of public administration personnel.”

<sup>108</sup> See Huneus (2000). According to Silva (2001: 26), ODEPLAN “was one of the main operation centers from which...neo-liberal technocrats formulated their ‘shock treatment’ for the Chilean economy.”

Chicago Boy.<sup>109</sup> After the coup, Kast quickly rose through the ranks of ODEPLAN, becoming its director in 1978, and later becoming a cabinet minister and the president of the central bank.<sup>110</sup> Under Kast's leadership, large numbers of *gremialista* professionals were recruited to work for the military regime throughout the national territory.<sup>111</sup> These *gremialista* recruits not only came to dominate ODEPLAN itself,<sup>112</sup> allowing them to play a key role in the design and implementation of economic and social policy, but they also used the agency as a springboard to other positions within the administrative apparatus.

A third, and particularly consequential, part of the administrative apparatus that the *gremialistas* managed to colonize was municipal government via mayoral appointments. Historically, local governments in Chile had had little formal power, though elections for mayor were extremely competitive.<sup>113</sup> During the dictatorship, this pattern was reversed: a large amount of power was devolved to local governments, but mayors were now appointed by the military junta rather than elected.<sup>114</sup> As part of this program of "municipalization," the administration of most areas of social policy were transferred from the national government to local governments, including health, education, housing and poverty

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<sup>109</sup> Because he was both a *gremialista* and a Chicago Boy, Kast "acted as a bridge between the two groups" (Huneus 2000: 464). On the one hand, he was "the leading figure of the second generation of Chicago Boys"; on the other, he had been a *gremialista* student politician in the Catholic University, first as the president of the student government in the Economics Faculty, and later as general secretary of the FEUC (Huneus 2000: 463).

<sup>110</sup> For an account of Kast's life by an acolyte and future UDI presidential candidate, see Lavín (1986).

<sup>111</sup> See Huneus (2000: 486, 491). For a list of some of those recruited by Kast, see UDI (1999: 14).

<sup>112</sup> For a detailed analysis of the senior staff at ODEPLAN, most of whom "were graduates of the Catholic University and members of the Gremialista movement," see Huneus (2007: 290-293).

<sup>113</sup> See Valenzuela (1977).

<sup>114</sup> According to Eaton (2004: 230), "these changes do not count as genuine decentralization, because municipal officials served as the direct agents of the center and at Pinochet's pleasure."

alleviation.<sup>115</sup> This growth in responsibility, combined with the creation of new municipalities throughout the country, created a demand for new mayors and other municipal administrators. Many of those appointed to fill these local positions were *gremialistas*. Indeed, the *gremialistas* “were able to take over local governments in many cities, including the largest ones, among them Valparaíso and Concepción, from the low-income areas of Pudahuel, San Joaquín, and San Miguel to the municipal area of Santiago itself” (Huneus 2007: 258).<sup>116</sup> Mayors had considerable discretion in the allocation of resources, making them virtual “mini-Pinochets” (Graham 1994: 47) within their municipalities.

A final state entity that was thoroughly penetrated by the *gremialistas* and that must be mentioned is the National Youth Secretariat. The secretariat was formed after the coup, on the advice of Jaime Guzmán, as a means of mobilizing youth support for the new regime.<sup>117</sup> Strictly speaking, it was not part of the administrative apparatus; instead, it was devoted to a range of recreational and educational activities, such as sports, university preparation courses and vocational training.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, the Secretariat had a political aim, which, according to Guzmán, was “to establish communication between the regime and youth, which would allow the armed forces and police to inspire a new generation of Chileans, endowed with a

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<sup>115</sup> For accounts of “municipalization,” see Graham (1994: 45-48); Raczynski and Romaguera (1995: 302-305); Loveman (2001: 285); Eaton (2004: 229-230); Klein (2004: 304-309); Huneus (2007: 256-257); and Valdivia (2012).

<sup>116</sup> The greater metropolitan area of Santiago is composed of several municipalities (*comunas*), each of which has its own mayor. The municipality of Santiago is only one part of this larger metropolitan area.

<sup>117</sup> The National Youth Secretariat was one of four secretariats—the others were for women, associations and culture—whose aim was to mobilize support for the regime. These were collectively grouped together into the Civilian Organizations Directorate, which was in turn part of the General Secretariat Ministry. For descriptions of these secretariats, see Huneus (2007: 243-250).

<sup>118</sup> See Huneus (2007: 249).

new mentality.”<sup>119</sup> To this end, the Secretariat attempted to educate young people about the ideals of the military regime, and sometimes engaged in directly political activities, such as helping to organize pro-regime get-out-the-vote operations during non-democratic plebiscites in 1978 and 1980.<sup>120</sup> The *gremialistas*’ domination of the Secretariat provided the group with important opportunities. First, it “became the natural gateway for youth to participate in the government after completing their university studies and before going on to hold other posts in ministries, regional governments, or cities” (Huneus 2007: 247). This was especially true for *gremialistas*, since the national head of the secretariat was “always a distinguished Gremialista leader from the FEUC [Catholic University Student Federation]” (Huneus 2007: 246).<sup>121</sup> Second, it was the means through which the *gremialistas* began to establish a grassroots organizational presence. As Huneus (2007: 246) notes: “The secretariat covered the whole country, having a branch in each province and most municipalities, where it worked with mayors and neighborhood associations.” Moreover, because the Secretariat carried out social work in some of the country’s poorest communities,<sup>122</sup> it facilitated the “construction of a political base for the *gremialistas*, since this entity [National Youth Secretariat] offered for the first time the opportunity for a right-wing group to establish contact with the popular sectors” (Valdivia 2006a: 79-80).<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Huneus (2007: 248).

<sup>120</sup> See Huneus (2007: 87-88). For an analysis of the non-democratic 1980 plebiscite, see Fuentes (2013).

<sup>121</sup> As Huneus (2007: 258) explains: “Many leaders of the National Youth Secretariat went on to political careers as mayors, a position that in turn became an important stepping-stone to a congressional career.” For a list of several of these leaders, see Huneus (2001a: 30-31).

<sup>122</sup> For example, the Secretariat distributed food, clothing, building materials and scholarships, and helped to organize activities such as reforestation, occupational training and drug prevention (Valdivia 2006a: 75-79).

<sup>123</sup> Huneus (2007: 249) describes such activities as clientelistic: “The secretariat did not abstain from developing clientelist relationships, using its financial resources to develop youth employment services. It also

In short, the *gremialista* penetration of the administrative apparatus of the military regime stretched from the very top to the very bottom: the group not only achieved a significant presence in the cabinet and in national agencies such as ODEPLAN, but also colonized lower levels—particularly via mayoral appointments and the National Youth Secretariat—where social and economic policies were put into practice. These different levels were mutually reinforcing, with *gremialistas* from each level using their influence to help other *gremialistas* to advance. For example, Jaime Guzmán used his influence as the main political adviser to Pinochet to get Sergio Fernández appointed minister of interior in 1978.<sup>124</sup> In turn, Fernández used his power over mayoral appointments to appoint the *gremialistas* recommended to him by Guzmán.<sup>125</sup> For their part, many of the *gremialistas* recommended for these positions had made names for themselves through their work in the National Youth Secretariat.<sup>126</sup> Once appointed, these mayors drew on their connections to *gremialistas* in national agencies, such as Miguel Kast, the director of ODEPLAN, or Miguel Ángel Poduje, the minister of housing, in order to funnel material resources to constituents in their particular municipalities.<sup>127</sup> These mayors, in turn, provided assistance to fellow *gremialistas* from the National Youth Secretariat working in their districts, and later to UDI activists after it was formed in 1983.<sup>128</sup> Thus, these various levels of *gremialista* penetration of

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provided financial aid to university students living at home, as well as scholarships for taking courses at business colleges.”

<sup>124</sup> See Pinto (2006: 78) and Huneus (2007: 196). See also Fernández (1994: 10).

<sup>125</sup> In Fernández’s words: “It was my job to appoint many mayors and, for the most part, these were suggested by Jaime [Guzmán]” (quoted in Pinto 2006: 62).

<sup>126</sup> See Huneus (2001a: 30-31; 2007: 259).

<sup>127</sup> See Huneus (2007: 203-207, 257-258) and Valdivia (2008c: 209).

<sup>128</sup> The role of sympathetic mayors in helping the UDI to construct its initial territorial organization will be discussed in Chapter 4.

the administrative apparatus worked together synergistically, with each level doing its part to help the movement to increase its broader penetration of the regime.

To recap, the power of the *gremialistas* had grown dramatically since its modest origins in the Catholic University in the mid-1960s. In little over a decade, they had gone from being a small group of right-wing university students to the “political team” of the military regime. In this capacity, they not only played a crucial role in defining the regime’s foundational project, but also penetrated much of the state administrative apparatus. At the same time, the group had become increasingly intertwined with the Chicago Boys, the “economic team” of the military regime. By the early 1980s, the position of these two overlapping regime factions—and that of their foundational project—seemed secure. In 1980, the junta had adopted a constitution that reflected the political vision of Jaime Guzmán. Moreover, the regime’s neoliberal economic policies were finally beginning to bear fruit in the form of rapid economic growth, leading observers to speak of a “Chilean miracle.”<sup>129</sup> Resistance to this foundational project, both from within and from outside the regime, was also muted. Rival factions within the regime had been outmaneuvered, and opponents outside the regime had been coerced into silence. Yet the foundational project of the *gremialistas* and Chicago Boys was not as secure as it seemed, nor was the quiescence of the opposition permanent. All that was needed to expose the vulnerability of the project was an external shock—a shock that came, unexpectedly, in 1982-1983.

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<sup>129</sup> See Loveman (2001: 279). As one Chicago Boy later reflected: “It was a period of euphoria. We were convinced we were on our way to becoming another Korea or Taiwan” (quoted in Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 193). Another economist within the regime promised in a speech given during this period that “in ten more years, Chile will be a developed country” (quoted in Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 193).

“Inside-Out”: Crisis and Marginalization of the *Gremialistas*

In 1982-1983, Chile was hit by one of the worst economic crises in the country's history. The crisis was the result of both domestic and international factors, including a spike in oil prices in the late 1970s and a dramatic rise in international interest rates in the early 1980s. The crisis affected all of Latin America, plunging the region into a “devastating depression” (Frieden 1993: 3). In Chile, however, the effects were especially severe: “In the space of a few months, the peso collapsed, capital inflows stopped, most of the private sector was bankrupted, and the financial system fell apart. Per capita GDP declined 16 percent and manufacturing output 21 percent; open unemployment went to 20 percent, with an additional 6 percent in public make-work programs” (Frieden 1993: 169). In 1982, “Pinochet's Chile experienced the worst one-year per-capita GDP decline...of any country in the Western Hemisphere” (Domínguez 1998: 71). Chile also had “the highest urban unemployment rate on the continent” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 197). Elsewhere in Latin America, including Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, the debt crisis helped to usher in a transition to democracy, as the private sector, middle class and parts of the military blamed incumbents for the economic disaster and defected from the authoritarian coalition.<sup>130</sup>

In 1983, as the depression continued into its second year, it appeared that Chile might also be heading toward crisis-induced democratization. As in neighboring countries, Chile's economic crisis gave rise to a political crisis, leading many to believe that the dictatorship was on its last legs. Until this point, observers had commented on the remarkable degree of “political demobilization” (Remmer 1980) that had occurred in Chile

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<sup>130</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 25-108) and Frieden (1993).



since the 1973 coup.<sup>131</sup> This all changed, however, as Chilean society remobilized in response to the economic crisis. Societal rumblings of discontent broke into open rebellion in May 1983, when labor unions organized a “national day of protest”: “All over Chile, and especially in Santiago, Chileans kept their children home from school, absented themselves from work, and—as the opposition had done in the time of protests against the Popular Unity government—banged on pots and pans, while screaming insults at Pinochet and calling for his ouster” (Loveman 2001: 294). Additional “national days of protest” were held in subsequent months, which grew increasingly violent as residents of Santiago’s *poblaciones* (slums) erected barricades and forcefully resisted attempts by soldiers to suppress them.<sup>132</sup> This wave of protests constituted a watershed for the opposition. After a decade of relative quiescence—the result of extreme coercion by the armed forces and secret police—it was “as if a spell had suddenly been broken” (Schneider 1991: 92). As civil society and political parties reemerged from the shadows and dared to defy the regime, it appeared that Chile had undergone an “invisible transition” (Garretón 1989).

The dictatorship responded to this explosion of protests with a double-pronged strategy of increased coercion *and* political liberalization. On the one hand, there was a sharp increase in the use of violence against the opposition. In August 1983, for example, in response to the fourth national day of protest, “[e]ighteen thousand soldiers hit the streets of Santiago, treating the *poblaciones* with particular violence, killing twenty-six people and leaving hundreds wounded” (Huneeus 2007: 372-373). While the annual number of deaths due to

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<sup>131</sup> This demobilization was particularly remarkable in light of the “hypermobilization” (Landsberger and McDaniel 1976) that had existed in Chile in the 1960s and early 1970s.

<sup>132</sup> For descriptions of these protests, see Garretón (1989); Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 241-242); Schneider (1991); Oxhorn (1995: 75-78); Roberts (1998: 118-127); and Loveman (2001: 294-295).

state violence had fallen during the late 1970s and early 1980s, it experienced a sharp rise in 1983 and 1984.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, the regime announced an unprecedented process of political “*apertura*” (opening), in which several of the regime’s authoritarian policies were relaxed. During this period (1983-1985), key opposition politicians were allowed to return from exile; media censorship was suspended; professional associations and student federations were allowed to conduct internal elections;<sup>134</sup> and the government entered into a “dialogue” with representatives of opposition political parties.<sup>135</sup> Although, initially, the protests had been organized by labor unions, leadership of the opposition quickly passed to political parties, which formed two main blocs: the Democratic Alliance (AD), which was dominated by the Christian Democrats but also included moderate Socialists, and the Popular Democratic Movement (MDP), which was dominated by the Communist Party and was more radical than the AD.<sup>136</sup> As part of its policy of “opening” and “dialogue,” the government held well-publicized meetings with AD leaders, and even allowed the grouping to hold a rally in Santiago attended by 300,000 people.<sup>137</sup> According to Oxhorn (1995: 76): “The political initiative oscillated between the opposition and the regime during this period, which is perhaps best characterized as an overall political stalemate.” In short, it seemed that the conditions were in place for a pacted transition to democracy.

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<sup>133</sup> See Huneus (2007: 380-381).

<sup>134</sup> The opposition swept virtually all of these elections in professional associations and student federations, including the Catholic University Student Federation (FEUC), which had been under *gremialista* control since the late 1960s (Huneus 2007: 374).

<sup>135</sup> See Huneus (1985; 2007: 373-374), Silva (1996: 187) and Loveman (2001: 300).

<sup>136</sup> See Oxhorn (1995: 75-76), Silva (1996: 183-184) and Roberts (1998: 125-127).

<sup>137</sup> See Huneus (2007: 373).

At the same time that the military authorities were extending an olive branch to a newly emboldened opposition, they were turning on two of the regime's most important factions: the Chicago Boys and the *gremialistas*. These two overlapping groups, which in the late 1970s and early 1980s had formed the regime's "economic team" and "political team," respectively, suddenly found themselves blamed for the country's deteriorating situation. With respect to the economic team, the crisis "had weakened General Pinochet's confidence in the Chicago boys, who were proving unable to resolve it" (Huneus 2007: 362). Indeed, their faith in the market seemed to prevent them from even considering state intervention in order to halt the country's economic collapse: "Despite the intensity of the crisis, the Chicago boys continued to argue with a dogmatic confidence that the economic difficulties were only temporary, and that 'market mechanisms' would produce an 'automatic adjustment' to restore economic equilibrium" (Silva 1991: 397). In April 1982, Sergio de Castro, the iconic and highly doctrinaire Chicago Boy who had been the finance minister since 1976, was dismissed from his post.<sup>138</sup> Although, at first, he was replaced by another Chicago Boy, the influence of the group was clearly in decline—as was the regime's commitment to unbending neoliberalism.<sup>139</sup> In an attempt to stem the economic bleeding, the regime engaged in "the most dramatic about-face of [the] dictatorship, one that seemed to repudiate everything the Chicago Boys had stood for" (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 198). Using the same expropriation law as Allende's socialist government,<sup>140</sup> in early 1983

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<sup>138</sup> Until this point, he had been the regime's "economic strongman" (Huneus 2007: 166).

<sup>139</sup> The finance portfolio was held by several individuals over the next few years. See Huneus (2007: 364) and Silva (1996: 162-163, 190-191, 203).

<sup>140</sup> Opponents of the regime mocked these actions as the "Chicago road to Socialism" (Loveman 2001: 292). In the words of one Socialist who had participated in the UP government and who later became a *Concertación* minister: "Ironically, after years of enforced privatization, the Pinochet regime now controlled 80 percent of Chile's financial sector; because of the tight connections between the banks and their affiliate companies,

the regime decided “to ‘intervene’ (take over management and operations of) the largest private banks in the country, assume responsibility for privately contracted debt, and begin a public rescue of the mangled private sector” (Loveman 2001: 292). The result of these measures was the exact opposite of the free-market utopia envisaged by the Chicago Boys: “Instead of withdrawing from the economy, the state had seized control of 70 percent of the banks and a large chunk of the nation’s private enterprise” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 197). Reflecting on the purges of Chicago Boys from the administrative apparatus and the abandonment of their policies, one Chicago Boy recalled this as “our lowest moment.”<sup>141</sup>

The military authorities also turned their sights on the *gremialistas*. In April 1982, the same month that Sergio de Castro was dismissed from his position as finance minister, Sergio Fernández, the powerful interior minister and a close ally of the *gremialistas*, was also forced to resign.<sup>142</sup> In August 1983, the regime appointed Sergio Onofre Jarpa, the last president of the now-defunct National Party, as interior minister.<sup>143</sup> Jarpa was given a mandate to lead a new government that would initiate a process of “opening” toward the opposition, with the aim of mitigating the increasingly intense protests. The appointment of Jarpa was highly symbolic, since he “represented traditional politicians who had been treated as obsolete by the new political order and who were seen as antagonistic to the ‘new

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Pinochet exercised a greater degree of control over Chile’s economy than Allende ever dreamed of” (Muñoz 2008: 137).

<sup>141</sup> Quoted in Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 198).

<sup>142</sup> See Huneus (2007: 363).

<sup>143</sup> As Huneus (2007: 372) explains: “The cabinet represented a major change, not only because of the eight new ministers, but also because most were well-known figures with considerable experience in government. Aside from Jarpa, there was Alessandri’s former labor minister, Hugo Gálvez, still in labor, and Frei’s former housing minister, Modesto Collados, still in housing.” For more on Jarpa’s appointment, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 198); Durruty (1999: 70-73); Huneus (1985; 2007: 203, 372-376); and Loveman (2001: 297).

institutional order' ” (Huneeus 2007: 374-375). Jarpa “had never sympathised with the ‘new right’ ” (Silva 1991: 397), and was not shy about using his new powers to go after factional rivals. In the words of one UDI founder: “The entrance of Jarpa was the exit of [Jaime] Guzmán.”<sup>144</sup> During this period, “relations between Pinochet and Guzmán cooled off... [Guzmán] was no longer a political advisor, he did not form part of the political commissions, nor of the committees that evaluated and analyzed the situation” (Soto 2001: 3). The influence of the Chicago Boys and the *gremialistas* had been in decline since April 1982, when “[t]he emblematic figures heading the two groups in charge of official policy since 1978, Gremialista Sergio Fernández and Chicago Boy Sergio de Castro, were thrown out of the cabinet” (Huneeus 2007: 363). Under Jarpa, however, the purge of these two groups gathered pace.<sup>145</sup> As Fernández (1994: 196), the interior minister displaced from his post, later recalled: “[T]he groups that had arrived in the government with the Minister of the Interior [Jarpa]...initiated a systematic displacement of the previous collaborators of the government within the entire public administration.” In response to “Jarpa’s private maneuvering, Pinochet eased most of the remaining Chicago Boys from policy-making positions and replaced them with individuals linked to the traditional, prostatist business world” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 198). The same occurred in the case of the *gremialistas*: “Pinochet had pushed the Gremialistas into the background, while Jarpa rejected them outright,” forcing them from powerful positions and “into mid-level governmental

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<sup>144</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 17 May 2012.

<sup>145</sup> See Silva (1996: 224).

posts” (Huneus 2007: 372, 374). The “Gremialistas’ influence plunged, as many of [the movement’s] supporters were fired from their posts” (Huneus 2007: 238).<sup>146</sup>

By August 1983, then, the *gremialistas* and the Chicago Boys—and their shared foundational project of protected democracy and neoliberalism—were facing a severe crisis. Against the backdrop of economic depression and large-scale opposition protests, the military authorities had turned on their erstwhile allies and demonstrated a willingness to chart a new course. As a result of the 1982-1983 crisis, the economic model of the Chicago Boys and the political model of the *gremialistas* had been called into question. Rather than moving to implement the transition to protected democracy envisaged in the 1980 constitution, the regime’s military leaders seemed ready to allow Jarpa to administer a return to the *status quo ante* through a pacted transition. In short, after a decade as regime insiders, the *gremialistas* and the Chicago Boys suddenly found themselves on the outside. This new set of circumstances would require new forms of political action.

### The Birth of the UDI

The Independent Democratic Union (UDI) was born on 24 September 1983. Technically, it was a “political movement” rather than a political party, since parties were still illegal in Chile. This distinction was a juridical fiction, however, and the UDI made it clear from the beginning that it was “determined to organize a political party as soon as these become legal.”<sup>147</sup> At the time of its birth, the UDI occupied an ambiguous position with

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<sup>146</sup> See also Durruty (1999: 70-71).

<sup>147</sup> See “Unión Demócrata Independiente,” *El Mercurio*, 25 September 1983.

respect to the military regime. On the one hand, almost all of its founders had spent years working within the military regime. The most notable examples were Jaime Guzmán, the main political adviser to the military junta for several years and the “architect” of the regime’s 1980 constitution, and Sergio Fernández, the interior minister and “head of cabinet” between 1978 and 1982.<sup>148</sup> These had been among the regime’s most high-profile civilian leaders, and they had played a central role in defining the regime’s foundational project of protected democracy and free-market economics. Most of the UDI’s initial members were *gremialistas*, with some exceptions.<sup>149</sup> The “Chicago Boys” were also represented, in some cases by individuals who were also *gremialistas*.<sup>150</sup> Virtually all had supported the coup and participated in the military regime in some way. As UDI co-founder Pablo Longueira explained in 1986: “[The UDI] is, fundamentally, a movement that brings together a generation of young people who collaborated with and felt represented by 11 September [1973], and have worked uninterruptedly...for these ideals.”<sup>151</sup>

On the other hand, the UDI was not the “official” party of the dictatorship either. Indeed, as described in the previous section, the *gremialistas* had been marginalized from the military regime by the time they formed the UDI. This was not coincidental. While

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<sup>148</sup> It is almost certain that Miguel Kast, the influential *gremialista* and Chicago Boy who had held the positions of ODEPLAN director, cabinet minister and president of the central bank, would have also been a founding member of the UDI had he not died of cancer at the young age of 35 on 18 September 1973, days before the founding of the UDI. See Soto (2001: 4) and Pinto (2006: 94, 97). Also author’s interviews.

<sup>149</sup> See Fernández (1994: 196).

<sup>150</sup> As noted above, the term “Chicago Boys” is a partial misnomer, since many of the most important economic policymakers in the military regime, despite sharing a general “Chicago” outlook, had not actually earned their post-graduate degrees at the University of Chicago (Huneus 2000: 478-479). Among the prominent “Chicago”-style economists who either helped to found the UDI, or who joined it at a later date, were Joaquín Lavín, Julio Dittborn, Hernán Büchi and Pablo Baraona.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in Soto (2001: 9).

Guzmán had long had the idea of one day forming a party,<sup>152</sup> it was not until he and his followers were partially sidelined that he decided to act. Thus, the UDI was born in September 1983, barely a month after Sergio Onofre Jarpa became interior minister and began to carry out his mandate from the military authorities to initiate a political “opening.” The circumstances of the UDI’s birth meant that, initially, the relationship between it and the government was cool. According to Sergio Fernández, “the UDI was not born under the protection of the government. It was born...independently of the government—even, I would say, against its will.”<sup>153</sup> One anecdote that serves to illustrate this coolness has to do with the publication of the UDI’s Declaration of Principles. The UDI’s founders were apparently so concerned that the regime would block its publication that they went to great lengths to keep it secret before it was finally printed in *El Mercurio* on 25 September 1983.<sup>154</sup> The UDI defined its stance toward the military government as one of “reasoned support and independent judgment.”<sup>155</sup> This implied “a firm defense of [the government’s] stability,” but also the explicit right to engage in “constructive criticism of the aspects that, in our judgment, make [such criticism] necessary.”<sup>156</sup> While it was hardly an opponent of the government, its support, as one UDI entity explained to the press, was “not unconditional.”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> In fact, he had even created two proto-parties during the first decade of the dictatorship: the National Unity Youth Front and New Democracy. See UDI (1999: 15-17), Huneeus (2007: 250-256) and Pinto (2006: 72-82).

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Pinto (2006: 96). See also UDI (1999: 20-21) and Soto (2001: 4).

<sup>154</sup> See Soto (2001: 5) and Pinto (2006: 95-96).

<sup>155</sup> See “Unión Demócrata Independiente,” *El Mercurio*, 25 September 1983.

<sup>156</sup> See “Unión Demócrata Independiente,” *El Mercurio*, 25 September 1983.

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in “Constituido el Comité de Mujeres de ‘UDI,’ ” *El Mercurio*, 27 December 1983.



The founders of the UDI understood the formation of their party as an essentially defensive act.<sup>158</sup> In their view, the foundational project of the military regime that they had played such a key role in crafting was being “threatened” by attacks on multiple fronts.<sup>159</sup> In the case of the newly reactivated opposition parties, the hostility toward the project was obvious: “[A]t that moment it seemed important to us to [defend the work of the military government], above all when we listened to the discourse of the Socialists of the time, of the Christian Democrats, [which] wanted to erase everything that the military government had done.”<sup>160</sup> Even more disturbing, for them, was the threat to the foundational project emanating from within the regime itself. As Sergio Fernández (1994: 193, 196) later recalled: “For the *gremialistas* and many independents that had collaborated with the government of the armed forces, the coming of Jarpa was a cause for apprehension,” since it indicated that “the vigorous modernizing drive of the government was ceasing in the political and economic realms.” Suddenly finding themselves the subjects of a “general displacement,” the *gremialistas* and their allies decided to fight back: “At the end of August [1983], it was clear that we had to organize ourselves, since, if not, in the context of the opening, precisely those ideas most closely linked to the military government would have no expression” (Fernández 1994: 193-194, 196). The initial goal of the UDI, then, was “to give permanence and projection to the new ideas that...had been expressed in the cabinet of 1978” (Fernández 1994: 195)—that is, the cabinet of the *gremialistas* and Chicago Boys.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> As Huneeus (2007: 238) puts it: “The UDI was instrumental in maintaining the movement’s influence within the regime and in preparing for the future succession scenario.”

<sup>159</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 26 October 2011.

<sup>160</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

<sup>161</sup> In a 1984 interview, Guzmán explained the party’s purpose in this way: “What the UDI wants is to rescue and project the basic direction [*sentido*] of the new political institutions and the socioeconomic modernizations

If there was one overarching conviction that motivated the UDI at the time of its birth—and that would continue to motivate it over the years—it was that the military regime should not be a “mere parenthesis.” This is a phrase that one hears repeatedly when talking to UDI leaders about the origins of their party. What this means is that they believed that the period of military rule should be transformative, not merely a stopgap between two (in their view) equally bad democratic governments. As one UDI founder explained: “[We] did not want the military government to be a parenthesis between two governments—between the Popular Unity and the government to come. [We did not want] it to be a mere parenthesis, but rather truly foundational of a new economic and political system.”<sup>162</sup> The traumatic memory of the Christian Democratic (1964-1970) and Popular Unity (1970-1973) governments haunted the *gremialistas*, and the idea of “returning to the past”—another phrase that UDI leaders repeat frequently—was for them a terrifying prospect. Yet, this was precisely what they feared was occurring under Jarpa’s direction. Not only was he a symbol of the old political system, but also “the political opening of Minister Jarpa was directed primarily toward the traditional parties and their spinoffs” (Fernández 1994: 196). For the founders of the UDI, a return to the *status quo ante* was not an acceptable outcome. As Longueira (2003: 27) explained: “For Jaime Guzmán all that had occurred since 11 September 1973 made no sense if, with the beginning of the political opening, the only political parties that emerged were the same ones that, with the same leaders and vices of the past, had led us to the institutional crisis.” Thus, it was in order to prevent this return to

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of the past ten years, duly corrected of their errors and supplemented [where there are] gaps. In other words, to neither ignore nor erase the many things of value that this regime has carried out, though we are far from the arrogance that prevents the recognition and attempt to correct errors” (quoted in Soto 2001: 4).

<sup>162</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 26 October 2011.

what they thought of as the bad old days that the UDI was formed. Its aim, in the words of one founder, was twofold: “[I]t was a movement [dedicated to] the defense of our ideas and preparation for what would come in the future.”<sup>163</sup> In the short run, the UDI would try to defend the group’s ideas by lobbying the government to return to the correct path. Unlike in the past, such lobbying “of Pinochet no longer happened behind closed doors, but in the newspaper.”<sup>164</sup> In the long run, the UDI would try to build a truly competitive conservative party that would allow them to defend their ideas in an eventual democratic regime.

The notion that the UDI was ever critical of the military regime is surprising, given its reputation for unflinching support of the legacy of the regime—a reputation that, in fact, has been largely accurate since Chile’s 1990 transition to democracy. Yet the party’s leaders were never blind followers of the general. Instead, in the words of one observer, their position toward Pinochet was one of “loyalty but not unconditional support” (Soto 2001: 4). Specifically, their support was conditional upon Pinochet’s ability or willingness to bring their foundational project to fruition. When Pinochet acted in ways consistent with that project, the UDI supported him enthusiastically; when he showed signs of deviating from it, the UDI demonstrated a surprising willingness to criticize. The most obvious example, of course, was the creation of the UDI itself in 1983, which was an implicit rebuke of the military regime’s direction at the time. But even after Jarpa was removed from the interior ministry in 1985 and relations with the regime improved, the UDI continued to criticize the military authorities when it felt this was necessary. In 1986, for example, the UDI published a document called *Chile, Ahora* (Chile, Now), in which the party openly criticized the

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<sup>163</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 26 October 2011.

<sup>164</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 10 November 10 2011.

authorities for their foot-dragging in the implementation of the 1980 constitution.<sup>165</sup>

Similarly, in a January 1987 interview, Guzmán criticized the government for relying on “states of exception” to persecute Marxist parties rather than bringing a formal complaint to the Constitutional Tribunal on the basis of the legal prohibition of such parties established in the 1980 constitution. In Guzmán’s rather harsh words: “In this matter, the government has acted in exactly the opposite way that it should have... It could have projected with clarity the system enshrined in the new institutions of the constitution. But it did exactly the opposite, in a governmental conduct that seems to me not only wrong, but frankly incomprehensible.”<sup>166</sup> Thus, while the UDI clearly had deep roots in the military regime and was frequently a close ally of Pinochet, it was ultimately more loyal to the foundational project of the regime than to the man leading the regime. This sometimes put the UDI in the awkward position of “defend[ing] the work of the military, even against the military itself” (Durruty 1999: 74).

The upshot is that the UDI was an example of what was described in Chapter 2 as an “inside-out” party. It was not the official party of Chile’s authoritarian regime along the lines of Brazil’s National Renewal Alliance Party (ARENA) or El Salvador’s Party of National Conciliation (PCN).<sup>167</sup> Nor was it born entirely outside of the state apparatus. Instead, the UDI straddled the line between what Shefter (1994) calls “internally mobilized” and “externally mobilized” parties. To be sure, most of the founders of the UDI had previously occupied high-level positions within the dictatorship; at the time of party

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<sup>165</sup> According to one UDI founder, its basic message could be summarized as: “Correct what you’re doing, government!” Author’s interview with UDI founder, 17 May 2012.

<sup>166</sup> See Guzmán (2008: 194).

<sup>167</sup> These parties were created in Brazil and El Salvador as the “official” parties of their respective military regimes. On Brazil’s ARENA, see Power (2000). On El Salvador’s PCN, see Chapters 6 and 7 of this study.

formation, however, they found themselves relatively marginalized from the halls of power. Disturbed by the direction being taken by the new authorities and their apparent willingness to abandon the regime's foundational project, these former regime insiders decided to turn to party-building. In the short run, this would mean lobbying to defend the work of the military regime from the military itself. In the long run, it would mean trying to build a mass-based conservative party capable of actually winning elections—the kind of party that, as discussed in the first section of this chapter, had never really existed in Chile.

### “A Poor People's Party”: Building a Mass Conservative Party

If the initial motive for the UDI's formation was to defend the military regime's foundational project from the military itself, the new party's founders also had a longer-term ambition: to build a mass-based conservative party that would allow them to continue to defend the project after an eventual transition to democracy. The UDI hoped that this transition would be on their terms—that is, following the schedule laid out in the 1980 constitution, and resulting in the system of protected democracy established therein—but from the outset the party-building project was premised on the notion of inevitable democratization. In the lead-up to the creation of the UDI, there was a debate among founders about the nature of the new party. In the words of one UDI founder: “The question we asked ourselves was: first, are we going to make an elite party of intellectuals, of university-educated professionals, of young businessmen [and] of entrepreneurs, or are we going to make a complex movement in which all strata of society have access and

participate?”<sup>168</sup> Since the formation of the *Movimiento Gremial* in the 1960s, the group’s profile had been closer to the former, and there was a fear that if the UDI became “really mass-based, it would have the problem of being very heterogeneous. We were going to have to accept really different people. And by being very different, [the party] was going to become messy, and we were going to have the same vices as all parties.”<sup>169</sup> Ultimately, however, they decided that if they truly wanted to defend the regime’s foundational project over the long term, it was necessary to build not only a mass-based party, but also one that specifically targeted the sector of society with the least history of supporting the right: the poor. As one UDI founder explains: “Finally, this internal discussion was settled by Jaime [Guzmán]... [He said] that he had personally arrived at the conviction that ours had to be a movement that always cultivated ideas, but that the only way that these [ideas] could prosper, survive over time and prevail was by spreading them—by proselytizing [*haciendo un apostolado*]*—in those places where it was most difficult for them to become known. And at that moment, we undertook the foundation of the UDI.*”<sup>170</sup>

This idea of specifically seeking support among the poor—or being, as the UDI describes it, a “*partido popular*”—was, from the beginning, one of the central pillars of the UDI’s identity.<sup>171</sup> The Spanish word “*popular*” can be translated in English as either “popular”

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<sup>168</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>169</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

<sup>170</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>171</sup> While not officially codified until the party’s Doctrinal Congress of 1991, from the beginning the UDI defined itself according to three core principles: commitment to the “social market economy,” being a party “of Christian inspiration,” and being a “*partido popular*.” In Chapter 4, I discuss the UDI’s commitment to the “social market economy” and the idea of being a party “of Christian inspiration.” See, for example, “UDI se define como partido ‘popular, de inspiración cristiana y partidario de la economía de mercado,’ ” *La Segunda*, 14 August 1990. See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).

or “poor.” The UDI has always used it in the second sense, meaning that it explicitly defines itself as a “poor people’s party.” As Jaime Guzmán explained, the term “*partido popular*” meant that the UDI “seeks to take root in the most modest sectors of the country—in the modest middle sectors and in the poorest and most disadvantaged sectors.”<sup>172</sup> They believed that their party had just as much potential to gain support among poor voters as other parties. The reason was simple: many people, including poor people, are right-wing, and the UDI was a right-wing party. According to one UDI founder, they estimated that around 40 percent of the population “support ideas of order, ideas of liberty, are in favor of democracy, [and] are grateful for the work of the military government,” and they believed that such people were to be found “in all sectors” of society, including the lower classes.<sup>173</sup> In addition to these natural supporters, the UDI believed that it could win the support of other poor voters by convincing them that its program—in particular, the “social market economy”—was the quickest route to a better, more prosperous life.<sup>174</sup> As Guzmán explained: “[T]he more that someone feels poverty, knows it, suffers it, the more one should become a supporter of the social market economy and become an opponent of socialism. [This is] because socialism does not solve the problems of the poor, and because the market economy is the best path for achieving development and providing well-being to the

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<sup>172</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).

<sup>173</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>174</sup> This conviction was largely based on the premise of trickle-down economics. As UDI leader Pablo Longueira (2003: 160) explained: “[T]here exists a private business world that competes in the globalized world, creating wealth and employment in order to allow, via development, an improvement in the quality of life of our middle class and to defeat, as soon as possible, the miserable levels of poverty in which thousands of Chilean families still live.” It was also hoped that the free market would encourage the “diffusion of property” to the lower classes, a central tenet of the notion of “popular capitalism” (Huneus 2007: 314-315).

poorest.”<sup>175</sup> Market-led development, then, was even more important for the poor than for the non-poor. For the non-poor, it would result in positive change, but “it is not going to be as significant [and] profound a change as the change of one who exits extreme poverty for a dignified life. Consequently, it is much more important for the poorest that a social market economy be adopted.”<sup>176</sup> The upshot is that the UDI believed that there was much support to be won among the poor, if only a conservative party were willing to pursue it.

The decision to define the UDI as a “poor people’s party” responded to both a moral and an electoral logic. Interviewing UDI leaders and activists, one gets the sense that they are genuinely concerned about lifting their fellow Chileans out of poverty, and that they sincerely believe that their policies are the best way of doing this. In addition to this moral concern, though, the UDI calculated that no conservative party could ever be truly successful without the electoral support of a significant number of poor Chileans. By Guzmán’s count, the electoral yield of conservative parties in the immediate pre-coup period had a “ceiling” of about 20 percent.<sup>177</sup> These parties had not been able to break through this ceiling, in Guzmán’s view, because of their inability to win the electoral support of the

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<sup>175</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996). Some UDI members go even further, accusing the left of keeping people in poverty so that they continue to vote for leftist parties. Alfredo Galdames, an UDI leader originally from a poor background, expresses this view: “I come from a family that is super poor—I lived in a *mediagua* [emergency shelter] with a dirt floor—so I was just like them [*pobladores*]. But I understood that a project like ours was much more effective at getting out of poverty than the project of the Communists and the left in general. They [the left] used the necessities of the people for political advantage. They even used to say: ‘We have to make problems even worse [*agudizar los problemas*] to make this unjust society explode.’ And that, ultimately, was a circle that led to more poverty... [T]hey had this conception of class-based parties that said ‘the right represents the rich and the left the poor.’ If one follows that analysis, one would have to conclude that since they represent the poor, then they need there to be poor people. Because electorally, the day there cease to be poor people, no one will vote for them anymore. We said: ‘Well, following the same logic, it is obvious that, *a contrario sensu*, right-wing parties are interested in you getting out of poverty and having a motivation in life other than class struggle’” (quoted in Pinto 2006: 132-133).

<sup>176</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).

<sup>177</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).



popular sectors. To be sure, the traditional conservative parties, though instruments of the “Chilean upper class,” had managed to win the support of some non-upper-class voters: “It is clear that if [their electorate] had been the upper class alone, it would have been impossible [to win 20% of the vote], since the percentage of the upper class in the country is not that big.”<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, according to the diagnosis of UDI founders, the number of votes that the traditional conservative parties had received from the popular sectors had simply not been enough to break through the 20-percent ceiling and win elections.

UDI leaders believed that there were two main reasons why the traditional right had not managed to win more votes from the popular sectors, and the new party consciously designed its party-building strategy in response to these shortcomings. First, the traditional right had often not even bothered to seek the votes of the popular sectors.<sup>179</sup> Many right-wing poor voters “had always been waiting for someone [on the right] to arrive... But since no one came there, the ones who ended up with the majority of their votes were the Christian Democrats.”<sup>180</sup> The reason why the right had not bothered to seek their votes, the UDI believed, was because of the pernicious logic of class-based voting—a logic to which the right, which should have resisted it, had itself subscribed. In the words of one high-level UDI leader, Chilean politics had been understood as divided along class lines, in which “it was the traditional right that represented the agricultural sectors, groups of a higher economic level [and] of a higher educational level; the Christian Democrats represented the

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<sup>178</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).

<sup>179</sup> Part of this neglect, according to UDI leaders, was due to pure “classism.” Indeed, the UDI often accuses the traditional right of being “classist,” in contrast to the UDI, a self-described “poor people’s party.” See, for example, “Congreso Doctrinario: En el discurso inaugural, el presidente de la UDI, Julio Dittborn, calificó a la derecha tradicional de ‘clasista’ y ‘más bien estatista,’” *El Mercurio*, 2 October 1991.

<sup>180</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

professional middle class; and the Socialist Party and the Communist Party traditionally represented the working class. These were the ‘three thirds’ of Chile. It was a society cut horizontally.”<sup>181</sup> Using language nearly identical to that of Gibson (1996) in his discussion of the logic of conservative electoral mobilization,<sup>182</sup> the founders of the UDI concluded that if Chilean society continued to be “cut horizontally” by parties in this way, the right would always lose. The right’s metaphorical “third,” in other words, was much smaller than an actual numerical third of the population and was thus not enough to deliver electoral victories. As such, the UDI made a conscious decision to “cut it vertically”<sup>183</sup> by seeking the support of all sectors of society, especially from poor voters who had been neglected by the right in the past. Today, UDI leaders view this innovation as “the great contribution of the UDI.”<sup>184</sup>

The second reason that the UDI believed that the traditional right had failed to win much support from the popular sectors was that, even when it had sought their support in the past, this had been limited to election season and was transparently “utilitarian” in nature.<sup>185</sup> According to Guzmán, this was insulting to poor voters: “Approaching someone [only] in search of his vote implies not incorporating him as a person... It implies saying: ‘What I am interested in is the vote of this person.’ And this is perceived perfectly well. The

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<sup>181</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 28 October 2011.

<sup>182</sup> According to Gibson (1996: 18), the small size of conservative parties’ upper-class core constituencies results in a unique electoral logic: “This numerical difference begets a qualitative difference in the strategy of conservative mobilization: *the Left seeks to slice society horizontally; conservative movements seek to slice it vertically.*”

<sup>183</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 28 October 2011.

<sup>184</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 28 October 2011.

<sup>185</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).

citizenry perceives it. The popular sectors perceive it.”<sup>186</sup> Based on their reading of the failed approach of past conservative parties, the UDI decided to approach the popular sectors in a different way: they would build long-term relationships with people living in the *poblaciones* years before elections were even held, and only ask for their votes much later. To use a phrase that party leaders often repeat, the UDI would simply “be there”<sup>187</sup>—that is, they would establish a continuous presence in poor neighborhoods rather than coming and going according to the electoral cycle. As recounted by one UDI leader who played a key role in the party’s early penetration of the *poblaciones*, they believed that this was a fundamentally different approach from that of the traditional right: “When there were elections, [the traditional right] would arrive in the popular sectors. The election would end, and it would leave the popular sectors. So, it played around a little in the search for votes, but it was never really inserted in the popular sectors. Our approach was the opposite. We inserted ourselves in the popular sectors, to make the popular sectors part of the UDI...[believing that] this would translate electorally later on.”<sup>188</sup> The ultimate goal was to transform the way that poor people viewed the right and, more generally, the relationship between class and partisanship. The UDI hated the idea of poor voters saying: “The left is synonymous with ordinary people [*el pueblo*]. And if I am one of those ordinary people, I have to support the left.”<sup>189</sup> The UDI wanted to erase this deep-seated idea, so that voters

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<sup>186</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).

<sup>187</sup> See Pinto (2006: 130-131).

<sup>188</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>189</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

would come to say: “Hey, I am poor, [and] I vote for the UDI. Why? Because the UDI is a poor people’s party [*partido popular*]... The UDI is a slum-based party [*partido poblacional*].”<sup>190</sup>

In order to achieve its goal of penetrating the popular sectors, the UDI created an organization called the *Departamento Poblacional*—literally, the Slum Department.<sup>191</sup> Since no conservative party had ever made a serious effort to penetrate Chile’s *poblaciones*, there was no obvious model for them to emulate. What did exist, however, were the models of two of the UDI’s arch-nemeses: the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party. Remarkably, the founders of the UDI consciously modeled their party-building strategy on the examples of the political forces they hated most. That the UDI would model itself on these parties was surprising, to say the least. As described above, the *Movimiento Gremial* had originally emerged in the 1960s in the Catholic University to oppose Christian Democratic student leaders who they believed were destroying the university. To this day, UDI activists reserve a special dislike for this party, even while recognizing certain similarities between Christian Democracy and their own party.<sup>192</sup> In the case of the Communist Party, UDI leaders viewed it as a singularly dangerous entity that was beholden to Moscow and hell-bent on imposing leftist totalitarianism on Chile.<sup>193</sup> Despite their intense hostility toward both parties, UDI

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<sup>190</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>191</sup> For a detailed account of the *Departamento Poblacional*, see Pinto (2006). See also Soto (2001).

<sup>192</sup> UDI activists also resent the Chilean Christian Democratic Party’s usurpation of the name “Christian Democracy,” since they believe that the UDI better embodies Christian Democratic principles than the party claiming the Christian Democratic banner. In the words of one UDI founder: “We felt that we were better Christian Democrats than the Christian Democrats themselves.... [F]or a long time, the inner spirit of the UDI has been to say: ‘We are more genuinely democratic and Christian than the Christian Democrats in Chile’ ” (author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011). Many assert that the UDI is very similar to European Christian Democratic parties, and that the Chilean Christian Democrats, with their center-left orientation, are in fact an aberration (author’s interview with UDI founder, 17 May 2012). For a scholarly comparison of the Christian Democrats and the UDI, see Luna et al. (2013). See also Pollack (1999: 160, 163).

<sup>193</sup> See, for example, Guzmán (2008: 191-196).

leaders believed that there were was much to be learned from them. It was true, as one UDI founder who helped to design the strategy toward the *poblaciones* put it, that the UDI was an “ideological right” whose “doctrinal proposal was the recipe most different from communism” and “absolutely opposed to socialism and all statist ideas.”<sup>194</sup> Yet, at the same time, in its quest to “make this discourse friendly” and to “diffuse our ideas in a world where, historically, no one had ever done it...we looked at the working model of the two forces that were installed in the *poblaciones*...the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats.”<sup>195</sup>

Why copy the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats? UDI leaders believed that each had achieved significant success in the *poblaciones*, but very different kinds of success. In the words of one UDI founder, the Communist Party “is most successful as an organization, but [it is] an electoral failure. In contrast, the Christian Democrats are less organic, more anarchic, but have an electoral result that is incomparable to that of the left’s project.”<sup>196</sup> The goal of the UDI, then, would be to build a party with “an organization similar to that of the Communist Party, but as successful or more than the Christian Democrats”<sup>197</sup>—all while advocating a firmly right-wing ideology. The Christian Democrats demonstrated that a party based on the “values of Christianity [and] of Western culture” could become a powerful electoral force and win electoral support among all sectors of society, including the poor.<sup>198</sup> The UDI also took from the party the practical example of university students and young professionals going out into the *poblaciones* to engage in social

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<sup>194</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>195</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>196</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>197</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>198</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

work.<sup>199</sup> In short, the Christian Democrats demonstrated to the UDI that it was possible for a non-leftist party of Christian inspiration to build a cross-class coalition and win elections. The Christian Democrats were well to the left of the UDI, but they were not Marxists either, which gave the UDI confidence that it, too, could find success among poor voters.

The most practical lessons, however, came from the Communist Party.<sup>200</sup> Despite hating everything that it stood for ideologically, UDI founders had a grudging respect for it as an organization. This stretched back to at least 1970 when, in analyzing why Salvador Allende had won the presidency in that year, Jaime Guzmán pointed to the existence of thousands of grassroots party cells scattered throughout the country.<sup>201</sup> This respect continued to grow over the course of the dictatorship, in recognition of the Communists' ability to withstand official repression far more effectively than the Socialists and other leftist parties.<sup>202</sup> By the time UDI founders began to explore the possibility of building a support base among the popular sectors, they had come to the conclusion that "the only real force that existed in the *poblaciones* was the PC [Communist Party]" (Pinto 2006: 129).<sup>203</sup> In the words of one UDI founder who had previously lived in a *población*: "I lived in the periphery,

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<sup>199</sup> Author's interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>200</sup> For detailed analyses of how the UDI emulated the Communist Party, see Valdivia (2006b, 2008b). See also Pollack (1999: 128-132).

<sup>201</sup> According to Valdivia (2008b: 142), "Guzmán's preferred model was the Communist Party, in which he saw the archetype of political success: strong in the social bases and a doctrine fully internalized by its activists."

<sup>202</sup> For analyses of the Communist Party's resilience, see Roberts (1998: 81-128) and Schneider (1991).

<sup>203</sup> Scholars have come to similar conclusions about the strength of the Communist Party during the dictatorship, in Chile in general and in the *poblaciones* in particular. According to Roberts (1998: 127), "the Communist Party [was] the predominant force within the Chilean Left through the mid-1980s." Much of its strength was rooted in the *poblaciones*: "The Communist Party tried to compensate for the weakening of the labor movement by directing new organizational energies toward the sprawling urban poblaciones... Consequently, poblador associations provided space for the resumption of grass-roots political participation, and they became primary building blocks of popular resistance to the dictatorship. Indeed, pobladores, and especially poblador youth, became the backbone of the Communist Party's popular rebellion strategy in the 1980s" (Roberts 1998: 123). For a similar analysis, see Schneider (1991).

and for that reason I was certain that...there was nothing truly powerful and solid [there] except for the Communist Party.”<sup>204</sup> The UDI believed that the Communist Party’s durability was a function of the quality of its activists and the structure of its organization. With respect to its activists, Jaime Guzmán was open in his admiration, telling a reporter in 1983: “I admire two things about them [the Communists]: their faith and their discipline.”<sup>205</sup> With respect to its organization, UDI leaders concluded that “the art and secret of the Communist Party” was the existence of many “small, permanent cells [*núcleos*]” of party activists who were truly committed to the cause.<sup>206</sup> Thus, while the UDI’s founders believed that the Communist Party was a fundamentally harmful force that needed to be forcibly eradicated from Chilean society, they also believed that there was much to be gained by following its organizational example. Based on their admiration of its activists and organization, the UDI consciously set out to become Chile’s “communists of the right.”<sup>207</sup>

To this end, the UDI began to enter the country’s *poblaciones* (primarily in the greater metropolitan area of Santiago) in late 1983, with the goal of building a base of disciplined and ideologically committed supporters who would be organized into numerous grassroots party cells. As if this undertaking were not quixotic enough, the UDI intentionally selected neighborhoods that it thought were most hostile to the right. In the words of one UDI founder, they sought *poblaciones* “with the greatest reputation for being Communist, with the greatest reputation for being committed to the [Communist] Party, with the greatest

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<sup>204</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>205</sup> Quoted in Valdivia (2008b: 139).

<sup>206</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>207</sup> See Pollack (1997: 132). This view was shared by Sergio Onofre Jarpa, who asserted that “[t]he UDI is a movement with Communist methods” (quoted in Allamand 1999: 146).

reputation of sheltering leaders of the MIR [Movement of the Revolution Left], with the most revolutionary priests in charge of their parishes.”<sup>208</sup> In other words, the UDI targeted “the most difficult *poblaciones* in Santiago, and...said: ‘If it works here, it will work in the whole country.’”<sup>209</sup> Following a September 1984 speech by Jaime Guzmán in a Santiago shantytown, this strategy became encapsulated in a much-repeated slogan: “Fighting the communists, inch by inch, in every *población* in the country.”<sup>210</sup> In short, the UDI would emulate the Communist Party’s organizational methods, and then apply those methods in an attempt to dislodge the Communist Party from its strongholds.<sup>211</sup>

The UDI began to put this strategy into practice in late 1983 by sending out emissaries from the party’s *Departamento Poblacional* into the country’s slums.<sup>212</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 4, this effort to penetrate the *poblaciones* was facilitated by the UDI’s origins in the military regime, since it benefited from networks of contacts from the National Youth Secretariat, assistance from *gremialista* mayors and the toleration of the military authorities, despite the legal proscription of party activities. This meant that when the UDI began its push into the *poblaciones*, it already had sympathetic contacts in some communities, whom it could draw on as part of its organization-building effort. In communities where it lacked such contacts, a handful of young UDI leaders would simply arrive in the *población*

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<sup>208</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011. See also Pinto (2006).

<sup>209</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>210</sup> Quoted in Pinto (2006: 131). Also author’s interviews.

<sup>211</sup> As Pinto (2006: 131) explains: “An important aspect of the strategy deployed by the movement [i.e.,] ‘to fight communism inch by inch in the *poblaciones*,’ did not imply that the [UDI] was going...to fight with the Communists...through the use of violence or confrontations. ‘Fighting the communists inch by inch in the *poblaciones*’ meant that, from that moment onward, the UDI, just as the PC [Communist Party] had done, would enter the *poblaciones* and would also *be there* doing permanent work.”

<sup>212</sup> For descriptions of how the UDI penetrated the *poblaciones*, see Pinto (2006) and Soto (2001). See also “UDI en las Poblaciones: ¿La Derecha Se Hace Popular?,” *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1990.



and begin knocking on doors. They were particularly interested in establishing links to local civil society groups and in finding right-leaning community leaders who could play the role of neighborhood gatekeeper. To this end, UDI emissaries would visit local markets, sports clubs, neighborhood associations, mothers' centers, etc., and seek out "natural leaders" of the community.<sup>213</sup> Because the UDI was short on manpower in its early years, winning over these local leaders—or "*caudillos poblacionales*,"<sup>214</sup> as the party referred to them—was important, since it had a multiplier effect. As Pablo Longueira, a founder of the UDI and one of the key leaders of the *Departamento Poblacional*, explained in 1986: "It is hard to have a presence there [in the *poblaciones*], to capture leaders, but afterwards growth happens almost on its own. This works on the basis of *caudillos*, or leaders whom many people follow. Initially, we went in search of those leaders, but now they come to us almost on their own. They are basically anti-Marxist leaders, many of them ex-Christian Democrats."<sup>215</sup> In short, when they were successful in winning over local leaders, the UDI would gain the support not only of the individual leader but also that of his or her followers in the community.

In line with its goal of emulating the Communist Party, the UDI followed its initial forays into new *poblaciones* with a serious effort to organize grassroots party cells composed of ideologically committed cadres.<sup>216</sup> Thus, it began to create *comités poblacionales* (slum

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<sup>213</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011. See also Pinto (2006).

<sup>214</sup> This expression was used by Pablo Longueira, one of the founders of the UDI and most important leaders of the *Departamento Poblacional*. See Pinto (2006: 125).

<sup>215</sup> Quoted in Soto (2001: 15). See also Valdivia (2008c: 217).

<sup>216</sup> One UDI founder and key leader of the *Departamento Poblacional* explained the source of inspiration for this party-building strategy as follows: "What did we take from the Communist Party? That it is not possible to persist over time with a political project and have a presence...in all socioeconomic strata of the country without having in those places [groups] of people that truly share the project, that share the ideas—that understand them and are capable of spreading them" (author's interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011).

committees), small groups modeled on the Communist Party's cell structure,<sup>217</sup> and to engage in ideological "proselytism", which consisted of "moral preaching" and the "spreading of ideas."<sup>218</sup> These ideas mostly had to do with the importance of pulling oneself up by the bootstraps.<sup>219</sup> As one *poblador* and local UDI leader explained: "It was not enough for the poor to wait for subsidies from the state; instead, one had to make an effort. The [left] did not like this, because we said that the poor person had to make an effort and better himself, that he had to study, that he had to take his own initiative."<sup>220</sup> Yet, arguably even more important for winning the support of *pobladores* were the UDI's various forms of social assistance, including gifts such as food, blankets and toys for children at Christmas, and services such as medical assistance and legal counseling.<sup>221</sup> Crucially, UDI leaders also drew on their intimate understanding of the military regime's social policies—policies that the *gremialistas* had played an important role in designing—in order to advise their supporters

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<sup>217</sup> Initially, the plan seems to have been for these committees to have no more than 20-25 members (Pinto 2006: 120). In practice, they ended up being bigger, often having more than 100 members (Pinto 2006: 152). Still, the idea of having many small groups remained in place. Thus, "when committees were formed that were too big," the UDI "opted to subdivide them," because "they believed that the work in the *poblaciones* should be the most *atomized* possible, that is, with the largest number of small groups possible to construct, since, for them, this was the only way of having a *real presence* in this sector of the population" (Pinto 2006: 153; emphasis in original). See also "UDI en las Poblaciones: ¿La Derecha Se Hace Popular?," *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1990.

<sup>218</sup> Author's interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>219</sup> According to Pinto (2006: 118-119), the UDI's goal was to provide "an education that sought to transform the mentality of people that [it] believed had been politically exploited by electoral clientelism and the left, a current that had dedicated its time and efforts to inculcating in the *poblaciones* an ideology that encouraged people to expect everything from an overbearing state, in this way discouraging individual initiative and each person's capacities, which incited class struggle, and with it, personal resentment. In contrast, he [Guzmán] believed that it was necessary to promote the role of a subsidiary state, the value of work and personal and collective effort as the only ways of getting ahead."

<sup>220</sup> Quoted in Pinto (2006: 163).

<sup>221</sup> See Pinto (2006: 169) and Valdivia (2008c: 224-225). See also "UDI en las Poblaciones: ¿La Derecha Se Hace Popular?," *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1990.

about how to access benefits, such as subsidies and low-income housing.<sup>222</sup> This organizational push into the *poblaciones* was effective: by 1986, the UDI had formed committees in almost every *población* in the greater metropolitan area of Santiago,<sup>223</sup> and while the party did not keep a detailed registry, it is estimated that by 1986 it had approximately 190 such committees and several thousand party activists.<sup>224</sup> The UDI quickly made its organizational muscle felt. In 1984 and 1985, for example, in response to the opposition's "days of national protest," it UDI organized a series of "anti-protests" in favor of the military regime with thousands of participants.<sup>225</sup> Similarly, in July 1984, the UDI managed to collect 82,000 signatures for a petition "against communism" (Pinto 2006: 175).

To conclude, while the initial catalyst for the UDI's birth was the marginalization of its leaders from the military regime following the 1982-1983 economic crisis, the founders of the party also had the long-term ambition of constructing a mass-based conservative party. In order to be successful, they believed that the new party would have to do something that the traditional right had never done: win votes from poor people without coercion. The UDI made this objective extremely explicit, defining itself as a "poor people's party." This commitment was not just rhetorical; it was matched by a serious organizational push into the country's *poblaciones*. The ultimate aim of UDI leaders was to build a party with hybrid characteristics: it would have a Communist organization, a Christian Democratic mass base and an ideologically right-wing platform. Whether this was viable was an open question.

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<sup>222</sup> See Pinto (2006: 164). See also "UDI en las Poblaciones: ¿La Derecha Se Hace Popular?," *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1990.

<sup>223</sup> See Soto (2001: 15).

<sup>224</sup> See Pinto (2006: 156-157, 168) and Soto (2001: 15).

<sup>225</sup> See Pinto (2006: 178-179), Soto (2001: 16) and Klein (2004: 316-317).

Before it could be tested, however, Chile would have to become a democracy—hopefully, from the UDI’s perspective, according to the formula laid out in the 1980 constitution.

### The UDI, RN and the Transition to Democracy

In the mid-1980s, the relationship between the military authorities and the *gremialista*-Chicago Boy alliance began to improve. As described above, following the 1982-1983 economic crisis, many *gremialistas* and Chicago Boys had been purged from their positions of influence, and the regime had appeared willing to abandon the foundational project of protected democracy and neoliberalism. After Sergio Onofre Jarpa was made interior minister in 1983, the regime began to liberalize and “the Gremialistas’ relationship with Pinochet was [put] on ice” (Huneus 2007: 290). Yet, while the *gremialistas*’ influence during this period was undoubtedly at its lowest point since 1973, the break between them and the regime was, in truth, never absolute. For example, although close *gremialista* ally (and future UDI co-founder) Sergio Fernández had been forced to resign as interior minister in 1982, in February 1984, he was appointed president of the commission tasked with drafting legislation for the implementation of the permanent articles of the 1980 constitution.<sup>226</sup> Jaime Guzmán, who had grown distant from Pinochet, was also appointed to serve on this commission.<sup>227</sup> In addition, informal contact between the *gremialistas* and Pinochet continued, particularly via two important leaders of the UDI’s *Departamento Poblacional*, Pablo Longueira and Luis Cordero: “[T]his contact with the people [*el pueblo*] would be the link that Longueira

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<sup>226</sup> See Barros (2002: 288) and Huneus (2007: 375).

<sup>227</sup> See Barros (2002: 288) and Huneus (2007: 238).

and Cordero maintained with Pinochet: in weekly sessions over a cup of tea, they transmitted to him the feelings and aspirations of a reality [in the *poblaciones*] to which he otherwise did not have access—an important relationship, since it was the only one that the *gremialistas* maintained with the head of government during this period” (Durruty 1999: 76-77).<sup>228</sup> Most importantly, the marginalization of the *gremialistas* within the regime did not extend to municipal government. This meant that many *gremialista* mayors appointed in the pre-Jarpa period continued in their positions, including the mayor of the municipality of Santiago, and the mayor of Valparaíso, Chile’s second largest city.<sup>229</sup>

If the *gremialistas* had feared a pact transition to democracy that did not follow the timeline and provisions of the 1980 constitution, their fears were ultimately allayed. While Jarpa had been given permission to carry out a “dialogue” with the moderate opposition, most observers believe that Pinochet was never truly committed to the process. As Loveman (2001: 297) puts it: “General Pinochet deftly utilized the rightist *políticos* as shills in a so-called political opening, or *apertura*. In reality, Jarpa had no power and certainly no ability to meet the most important demands of the opposition: General Pinochet’s resignation and the immediate return to democracy.”<sup>230</sup> In short, whatever Jarpa’s intentions in launching the 1983-1985 “opening,” Pinochet seems to have viewed the process as little

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<sup>228</sup> Also author’s interviews.

<sup>229</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4, several of these mayors later became UDI deputies, including Santiago mayor Carlos Bombal (1981-1987) and Valparaíso mayor Francisco Bartolucci (1978-1987). For a list of several of these mayors and the dates of their appointments, see Pinto (2006: 65).

<sup>230</sup> Similarly, Silva (1996: 187) writes: “[I]t soon became evident that Pinochet had used Jarpa to drive a wedge between the business and political oppositions [*sic*] and to diffuse the force of the mass mobilization by drawing Alianza Democrática to the negotiating table.” See also Huneeus (2007: 372).

more than a ruse to buy time. In 1985, the “opening” ended when Jarpa was removed from his post.<sup>231</sup>

As the economic crisis wound down and Jarpa’s political opening ended, the Chicago Boys and *gremialistas* saw their influence recover. As Huneus (2007: 2003) explains: “The fifth government was set up in February 1985 and involved institutional reorganization, the return of the Chicago Boys, and a partial rebound of the Gremialistas’ influence, expressed in [*gremialista*] Miguel Ángel Poduje’s appointment to the Housing Ministry.” In July 1987, the return was completed when UDI founder Sergio Fernández was once again made interior minister, “which in turn brought the Gremialistas back to the government” (Huneus 2007: 204). The same was true for economic policy. While the neoliberal model had seemed under threat during the 1983-1985 period, the regime made clear its renewed commitment to the model when it appointed Hernán Büchi finance minister in 1985. As Campero (1995: 140) explains: “The government maintained an ambiguous line in matters of economic policy during this period [1983-1985]. At times, it favored the orthodox line of the Chicago Boys... At other times, the regime favored the more pragmatic position of the entrepreneurs. This ambiguity was resolved in 1985 when Hernán Büchi became the minister of finance, as he struck a balance between the views of the Chicago Boys and the entrepreneurs.” Technically, Büchi was not a Chicago Boy, since he had done his postgraduate work at Columbia University rather than the University of Chicago.<sup>232</sup> Nevertheless, he was a U.S.-trained technocrat firmly committed to the neoliberal model,

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<sup>231</sup> See Huneus (2007: 390-392).

<sup>232</sup> For discussions of Büchi’s trajectory and the significance of his appointment, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 213-214); Silva (1996: 203); and Huneus (2007: 280-281).

albeit of a more “pragmatic” variety.<sup>233</sup> He was also “a close friend of Jaime Guzmán and was a Gremialista by the time he became a minister” (Huneus 2007: 281). For all of these reasons, his appointment was taken as a signal that the free market was safe. Büchi did not disappoint: “Upon taking office, the young minister set out energetically to restore the broad lines of the free-market model: stimulating private enterprise, reducing the state’s role, and opening up the economy to world markets” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 214).

Thus, by the mid-1980s, the threat to the foundational model of protected democracy and neoliberalism had apparently passed. Given that this was the factor that had initially prompted the creation of the UDI, one might have expected the party to dissolve at this point. Yet the UDI continued its operations, for two reasons. First, although the threat to the 1980 constitution from traditional politicians such as Jarpa and from the opposition had passed, there continued to be a threat from Pinochet himself. By all accounts, Pinochet was not a particularly ideological person. Rather, he was a “cautious, apolitical opportunist” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 52) who was interested primarily in maintaining his own power. This meant that his commitment to the 1980 constitution was always somewhat doubtful. Just as his decision to allow Jarpa to initiate a political opening in 1983-1985 was probably an insincere ploy to buy time, his agreement to push for the approval of a new constitution in 1980 seems to have been based on the calculation that this would be useful for consolidating his own power. As the constitutionally scheduled 1988 deadline for a plebiscite on his leadership approached—after which, in theory, a transition to protected democracy would occur that, even if he won the plebiscite, would limit his powers—Pinochet began to claim publicly that the constitution in fact guaranteed him sixteen years in

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<sup>233</sup> For a description of “pragmatic neoliberalism” and how it differed from the regime’s previous “radical neoliberalism,” see Silva (1996).

power rather than eight.<sup>234</sup> This interpretation was a clear violation of the 1980 constitution, and the UDI flatly rejected it. Unlike Pinochet, the UDI's leaders actually believed in the regime's foundational project—which they had, after all, played a crucial role in designing. Thus, while the *gremialistas*' influence had largely rebounded since Jarpa's departure, their work of lobbying the regime to keep its own promises was not over.

The second reason for the UDI to continue its activities was to prepare for the inevitability of competitive elections. As described above, based on their interpretation of the failings of the pre-1973 right, UDI leaders aimed to construct a mass-based conservative party with cross-class support. The UDI, however, was not the only new group on the right with such ambitions. Two other important groups must also be mentioned. One was the National Unity Movement (MUN), which was created in November 1983 by Andrés Allamand, who had been a secondary school student leader of the old National Party (PN) during the Allende years.<sup>235</sup> The MUN shared with the UDI a profound opposition to the left and a firm commitment to the dictatorship's economic model. However, the two groups differed in important ways, too. For one, the MUN did not have a negative view of the old right. According to Allamand (1999: 60-61), the MUN's "first task was to incorporate the greatest number of possible representative figures of the old PN [National Party], since, unlike the UDI, we never renounced the traditional right."<sup>236</sup> Another difference between

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<sup>234</sup> In Pinochet's words: "Some have not understood: the constitution establishes sixteen years. The first eight are for legislating, that is, for dictating laws and regulations that complement the constitution. And the eight that follow are for applying those laws in concrete form" (quoted in Allamand 1999: 86-87). See also Durruty (1999: 73).

<sup>235</sup> For descriptions of the MUN, see Allamand (1999: 60-113), Durruty (1999: 77-79), Pollack (1999: 89-90) and Huneus (2007: 375-376, 403).

<sup>236</sup> Indeed, its goal was "to ensure that the [MUN] was the natural place for the traditional right, the same right that belonged to the PN and had proved itself in the struggle against Allende, and, at the same time, manage to create a space of convergence for people without that past" (Allamand 1999: 60).



the MUN and the UDI was the former's lack of commitment to the details of the 1980 constitution. In fact, the MUN even joined with leftist and centrist opposition parties in August 1985 to sign the so-called National Accord for the Transition to Full Democracy.<sup>237</sup> The other important new right-wing group that deserves mention is the National Labor Front (FNT), which was created by Sergio Onofre Jarpa.<sup>238</sup> As Pollack (1999: 92) explains: "The FNT was set up in 1985 by Jarpa after his resignation as interior minister, principally as a vehicle for his political ambitions. It sought to bring together anti-communists and other right-wing elements who did not share the free market orientation of the Chicago Boys... [T]he FNT was an attempt to reintroduce the notion of a nationalist right." In sum, the UDI was not the only new proto-party of the right created in anticipation of eventual democratization. There were at least two other major options, both of which were rooted in the pre-1973 right and disagreed with the UDI on important points.<sup>239</sup> While the UDI and the MUN coincided on economic policy, they disagreed on politics. Conversely, while the UDI and FNT largely agreed on politics, they had very different economic views.

Despite these notable differences, the UDI briefly merged with the MUN and FNT in 1987-1988 to create a single party of the right: National Renewal (RN).<sup>240</sup> The proposal for such a merger was made by MUN leader Andrés Allamand in early 1987, following the

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<sup>237</sup> For discussions of the National Accord, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 271-272, 289-292); Allamand (1999: 94-104); Durruty (1999: 79-82); Loveman (2001: 299); and Huneus (2007: 379).

<sup>238</sup> For a description of the FNT, see Jarpa (2002: 374-377, 381-382). See also Durruty (1999: 88), Huneus (2007: 376) and Barrett (2000: 10).

<sup>239</sup> Finally, in addition to MUN and FNT—both of which had deep roots in the old National Party (PN)—a resurrected version of the PN was also created. In truth, however, the PN "diaspora" was divided among all three of these parties, and the fact that it claimed this name for itself was a cause for resentment. See Durruty (1999: 85-86), Pollack (1999: 90-91), Allamand (1999: 59-60, 112-113) and Huneus (2007: 376, 402).

<sup>240</sup> For accounts of the formation of RN, see Allamand (1999: 114-124), Durruty (1999: 89-94), Pollack (1999: 93-94) and Huneus (2007: 402-404).

re-legalization of parties in the lead-up to the 1988 plebiscite.<sup>241</sup> As Huneeus (2007: 403) explains, the UDI had serious doubts about joining the new entity: “Initially, the UDI viewed this [MUN] initiative with considerable mistrust. UDI members found it difficult to consider uniting with the [MUN], given the historical differences between them. The Gremialistas had committed themselves to the authoritarian regime, paying a high cost, while the [MUN] had generally remained aloof and in some cases had criticized it. The Gremialistas also feared that Sergio Onofre Jarpa, who had persecuted them when he was interior minister, would work with Andrés Allamand to control the new party.” In addition, they doubted that the MUN and FNT were as committed to grassroots work as the UDI, and they were reluctant to give up the “brand” that they had worked so hard to develop over the past three and a half years.<sup>242</sup> Ultimately, however, the UDI relented and agreed to merge with the MUN and FNT to create RN.<sup>243</sup> Leaders of each of the three constituent parts—Jaime Guzmán from the UDI, Andrés Allamand from the MUN and Juan de Dios Carmona from FNT (Jarpa had refused the position)—became vice presidents of the new party, with Ricardo Rivadeneira, a figure not affiliated with any of the constituent parts of the merger, becoming interim RN president until internal elections could be held.

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<sup>241</sup> Along with the MUN, FNT and UDI, the newly resurrected PN was also asked to take part in the merger. However, “[t]he PN rejected the invitation, opposing the exclusion of the democratic right and objecting to the presence of the FNT and UDI, perceived by the PN as anti-democratic. The PN thus allied itself with the democratic right sector linked to the opposition AD” (Pollack 1999: 94).

<sup>242</sup> See “Previas a Fusión con la UN: Tres Posturas Hubo en Ampliado de la UDI,” *El Mercurio*, 26 January 1987.

<sup>243</sup> See “Partido Renovación Nacional: Cómo Se Llegó a la Unidad,” *El Mercurio*, 8 February 1987.

One year later, in April 1988, this experiment ended in failure with the UDI's departure from RN.<sup>244</sup> Tensions within the new party had existed from the outset. While three groups had merged to form RN, the new party quickly polarized into two internal factions: the former UDI and a dyad of the former MUN and FNT.<sup>245</sup> Substantively, these factions were divided over, first, whether it was best to follow the plebiscite formula described in the constitution or to hold competitive elections in 1988 and, second, whether the regime candidate in a possible plebiscite should be Pinochet or someone else.<sup>246</sup> The MUN-FNT preferred competitive elections, but, in the case of a plebiscite, preferred to have a candidate other than Pinochet, preferably a civilian.<sup>247</sup> The UDI, in contrast, strongly favored a plebiscite with Pinochet as the candidate. In addition, the two sides were separated by a deeper, almost "cultural" difference. As Allamand (1999: 127) admitted: "Although in terms of generation the UDI and [MUN] were more similar, there is no denying that in strictly affective terms we [MUN] felt closer to the FNT." This stemmed in part from their shared historical roots in the old National Party (PN), a history of which the UDI was utterly contemptuous. Tensions increased after December 1987, when Ricardo

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<sup>244</sup> For accounts of the conflicts that resulted in the UDI's departure from RN, see Allamand (1999: 125-147), Pollack (1999: 94-99) and Huneus (2007: 404-407).

<sup>245</sup> According to Allamand (1999: 127), "the old identities of the UN and the FNT tended to disappear; the UDI, in contrast, never abandoned its own identity. It didn't even try."

<sup>246</sup> Holding a plebiscite with a candidate other than Pinochet would not have required a constitutional amendment, since the transitory articles of the constitution did not specify that the candidate of the military junta be Pinochet (Huneus 2007: 396). Holding competitive elections instead of a plebiscite, however, would have required a constitutional amendment (Huneus 2007: 402).

<sup>247</sup> The idea of having an alternative candidate in the plebiscite was not necessarily a far-fetched idea. As Barros (2002: 306) notes: "The question of the candidate for the plebiscite divided the Right after mid-1987 and eventually caused the division of the newly formed broad, unified Right party, *Renovación Nacional*, in April 1988. The members of the Junta themselves, on a number of occasions, declared publicly that the candidate would be a civilian, implying both that it didn't necessarily have to be Pinochet and if he was the candidate and won, he would serve as a civilian. Despite ongoing grumbling about a 'consensus candidate,' in the end the Junta nominated President Pinochet for a second term." See also Angell (2007: 32-33).

Rivadeneira resigned as interim party president and was replaced by Jarpa. While the former had been a “consensus president” (Pollack 1999: 94), the latter was part of an internal faction and was thus not seen as impartial. The conflict between the UDI and MUN-FNT came to a head in March 1988 over internal elections to select RN’s governing body. At the last minute, Jaime Guzmán demanded that the elections be canceled, alleging electoral “irregularities” and demanding Jarpa’s resignation.<sup>248</sup> When elections went ahead anyway and the MUN-FNT won, Guzmán increased his public attacks against Jarpa. In late April 1988, RN’s disciplinary tribunal responded by expelling Guzmán from the party. Guzmán left, “taking the majority of UDI members with him and reestablishing the *gremialista* party as a separate entity” (Pollack 1999: 99). The rump RN continued to exist, and in fact became Chile’s most important conservative party during the 1990s. Yet, even without the awkward presence of the UDI in the party, RN remained a “marriage of convenience” (Boylan 1997: 220) among very different factions and was plagued by constant infighting.

After their exit from RN, Guzmán and his followers formed an organization called the “UDI for the Yes,” the sole purpose of which was to campaign in favor of Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite.<sup>249</sup> In theory, all of the permanent articles of the 1980 constitution would go into effect after the plebiscite, whether or not Pinochet won a second eight-year term. However, Guzmán believed that, in practice, the likelihood of the constitution being implemented in full was very slim if Pinochet were defeated. According to Huneeus (2007: 396), this was based on his reading of the causes of the dismantling of Spain’s authoritarian

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<sup>248</sup> See Pollack (1999: 97) and Huneeus (2007: 405).

<sup>249</sup> Although parties were now legal in Chile, the UDI could not register as a party for several months, for legal reasons. Thus, the UDI—now called the “UDI for the Yes”—would once again have to maintain the legal fiction of being a “movement” rather than a “party.” See Durruty (1999: 103).

institutions after Franco's death. In order to ensure that the same did not occur in Chile, Guzmán argued that it was necessary for Pinochet to remain in power for an additional eight years. In Guzmán's words: "[It is Pinochet's job to] establish the foundations of a stable democracy [and] moreover realistically and opportunely assume the responsibility for pushing and guiding the country into the full functioning of the new democracy. To separate the transition from the eventual institutionalization would be to deprive it of its main outcome and meaning."<sup>250</sup> To be sure, Guzmán had had his differences with Pinochet in the past, when it had seemed that the general had been deviating from the 1980 constitution. Now that Pinochet was actually implementing the constitution, however, Guzmán once again became a steadfast ally. Eventually, RN also decided to support Pinochet in the plebiscite, though he had not been its first choice. Its support, however, was "at best lukewarm" (Pollack 1999: 101). In contrast, the UDI "joined the officialist campaign from the outset and with great enthusiasm" (Pollack 1999: 101).<sup>251</sup>

Pinochet lost the October 1988 plebiscite.<sup>252</sup> In a relatively fair election with very high levels of participation, 56 percent of voters rejected the general's bid for another eight-year term. Unlike RN, which immediately recognized the victory of the "No," the UDI appeared to hesitate—as did Pinochet himself.<sup>253</sup> Ultimately, however, the other heads of the armed forces compelled Pinochet to accept the result and to forego the idea of carrying

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<sup>250</sup> Quoted in Huneus (2007: 396).

<sup>251</sup> See also Durruty (1999: 98-105).

<sup>252</sup> For accounts of the 1988 plebiscite, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 296-311); Loveman (2001: 303-304); and Huneus (2007: 395-430).

<sup>253</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1999: 309); Durruty (1999: 108); Loveman (2001: 304); and Huneus (2007: 433).

out a self-coup the night of the plebiscite.<sup>254</sup> Over the next year and a half, the military regime made preparations for a transition to democracy. Partially confirming Guzmán's fears, the permanent articles of the 1980 constitution were not implemented exactly as written. Instead, RN and the opposition parties of the *Concertación* negotiated a series of reforms (later approved by plebiscite) that removed or watered down some of the constitution's most undemocratic features: the number of elected senators relative to appointed senators was increased; the powers of the military-dominated tutelary body known as the National Security Council were reduced; the ban on Marxist parties was replaced with a ban on parties that promoted violence; and the formula for future constitutional reform was made somewhat less onerous.<sup>255</sup> Yet, while these reforms were disappointing to the UDI, from their perspective there was still much to celebrate. It was true that the 1980 constitution had been altered, but it still retained its essential features. There were still appointed senators, tutelary bodies and unelected mayors, and Pinochet would continue to serve as the commander-in-chief of the army. Moreover, because of an "organic" law introduced shortly before the transition to democracy, there would also be an electoral formula ("binomial system") that virtually guaranteed overrepresentation of the right in Congress.<sup>256</sup> Finally, the free-market economic system, which had been a key part of the military regime's foundational project, would remain in place. In short, as the transition to democracy occurred, the UDI had much to celebrate—and also much to defend.

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<sup>254</sup> See "Pinochet Tried Defying Defeat, Papers Show," *The New York Times*, 23 February 2013, and "Chile's Gen Pinochet 'tried to cling to power' in 1988," *BBC*, 24 February 2013.

<sup>255</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 313); Loveman (2001: 305); Huneeus (2007: 435-438); and Siavelis (2008: 192-193).

<sup>256</sup> On the binomial system, see Chapter 4.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the origins of the UDI, and demonstrated that the party had deep roots in the 1973-1990 military regime. The UDI's founders had been high-level incumbents of the dictatorship, and with the return of democracy, the UDI became an authoritarian successor party. Yet the UDI was distinct from the authoritarian successor parties discussed by most of the literature. Unlike parties such as Mexico's PRI, Taiwan's KMT or ex-communist parties in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the UDI was never the official ruling party of Chile's authoritarian regime. Instead, it was what I described in Chapter 2 as an "inside-out" party: its founders were former regime insiders, but they only turned to party-building after being temporarily marginalized within the regime. As will be seen in Chapters 6 and 7, the origins of El Salvador's ARENA were similar. Like the UDI, ARENA was founded by former authoritarian incumbents after being displaced from power. Finding themselves on the outside, these former insiders turned to party-building in an attempt to reclaim lost influence. Would an "inside-out" party benefit from the same sorts of advantages often enjoyed by former ruling parties? In the next chapter, I examine the UDI's success under democracy, and argue that it not only benefited from authoritarian inheritance, but that this was the main determinant of its success.

## CHAPTER 4

### **Chile's UDI: Authoritarian Inheritance and Party-Building Success**

In Chapter 3, I examined the origins of the UDI, and demonstrated that it had deep roots in the 1973-1990 military regime. Though never the “official” party of the regime, it was founded by high-level authoritarian incumbents, played a key role in the development and implementation of many of the regime’s signature policies and actively campaigned on behalf of Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite. It was not obvious that a party like the UDI could succeed under democracy. This was a party founded by former insiders of the military regime, and that made ostentatious displays of its devotion to the legacy of that regime; that regime, however, had just been defeated by popular vote. If there were any doubts about the UDI’s viability under democracy, these were laid to rest by its strong performance in the “founding election” of 1989 and in subsequent electoral cycles (see Figure 4.2). By 2001, the UDI had become the most-voted-for party in Chile, and would retain that position in all subsequent elections for the Chamber of Deputies. In short, the UDI, a party with deep roots in an authoritarian regime, enjoyed tremendous success under democracy.

In this chapter, I examine the success of the UDI and argue that it can be explained by authoritarian inheritance. While its links to the previous dictatorship no doubt made voting for it unthinkable to many Chileans, this genealogy also gave the UDI access to a number of valuable resources.<sup>1</sup> These were crucial for allowing the party to overcome the main challenge faced by all conservative parties: the construction of a multiclass electoral coalition. In this chapter, I identify five forms of authoritarian inheritance from which the

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<sup>1</sup> Other authors have also noted the UDI’s inheritance of resources from the military regime. For example, Huneeus (2001a: 10) discusses the UDI’s inheritance of “authoritarian resources,” and Morales and Bugueño (2001: 234) discuss the inheritance of the “political resources of authoritarianism.”



UDI benefited. First, the UDI inherited the “brand” of *Pinochetismo*. Due to traumatic memories of the Allende government (1970-1973) and the relative success of the military regime, this brand was attractive to a significant number of Chileans and was thus an electoral asset. Second, the UDI inherited clientelistic networks. These had been forged by *gremialista* mayors appointed to poor neighborhoods during the military regime. Following democratization, the UDI inherited these networks and made electoral use of them. Third, the UDI inherited a territorial organization. While part of the UDI’s organization-building was the product of sheer tenacity, the party was also aided in its efforts by sympathetic mayors, networks of contacts established through the pro-regime National Youth Secretariat, an intimate knowledge of the regime’s social policies and the tolerance of the military authorities. Fourth, the UDI inherited business contacts. The business community had been a staunch supporter of the military regime. Because of the UDI’s inheritance of the *Pinochetista* brand and network ties between party and business leaders, the UDI became the preferred party of business after the transition to democracy. Finally, the UDI inherited a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. The UDI understands its history as a heroic struggle against sinister enemies, during which its members suffered terrible persecution—most dramatically, with the 1991 assassination of UDI founder Jaime Guzmán. The sense of mission and camaraderie that resulted from this struggle has been an effective source of cohesion for UDI leaders, allowing the party to avoid debilitating schisms.

In order to make this argument about the impact of authoritarian inheritance on the UDI’s success, I divide this chapter into three sections. In the first section, I examine the basic characteristics of the UDI under democracy. I demonstrate that, like the other parties examined in this study, it was ideologically right-wing and was a conservative party according

to Gibson's (1996) sociological definition. However, I demonstrate that it differed from some other parties—particularly Argentina's UCEDE (see Chapter 5)—in two key respects. First, the UDI was far more electorally successful than the UCEDE, building a multiclass electoral coalition that went well beyond its elite core constituency. Second, the UDI was an authoritarian successor party, while the UCEDE was not. In the second section, I ask why a conservative authoritarian successor party emerged in Chile, and argue that it can be explained by two of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: the level of threat prior to the onset of authoritarian rule and the performance of the authoritarian regime. In the third and longest section, I examine the various forms of authoritarian inheritance from which the UDI benefited, and argue that these were instrumental for the party's success.

### The UDI under Democracy

As Chile made the transition to democracy in 1988-1990, the party system that emerged had significant continuities with the one that had existed before the 1973 coup.<sup>2</sup> All of the major parties of the center and the left survived the authoritarian interlude, notably the Socialists and the Christian Democrats (albeit now as allies as members of the coalition known as the *Concertación* rather than as rivals, as they had been previously), and, to a lesser degree, the Communist Party, which survived as a relatively marginal party. On the right, however, there was greater change. Two new conservative parties emerged: National Renewal (RN) and the Independent Democratic Union (UDI). As discussed in Chapter 3, RN was something of a hybrid between a new party and a resurrected National Party (PN).

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<sup>2</sup> See Valenzuela and Scully (1997).

On the one hand, there was a significant degree of continuity between the PN and RN: several of RN's leaders had previously been important figures in the PN,<sup>3</sup> and the party explicitly embraced the legacy of Chile's traditional conservative parties.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, there were also important elements of newness to RN: its strong commitment to the free market was a departure from the PN's more nationalistic stance,<sup>5</sup> and some of its most important leaders had either never belonged to the PN (e.g., Sebastián Piñera) or had been so young when the PN existed that they had not played a significant role in national politics (e.g., Andrés Allamand).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, a formally resurrected version of the National Party, which maintained the name of the old party and contained a significant number of former PN leaders, actually emerged in the 1980s; it refused to join RN, and did badly at the polls.<sup>7</sup> The existence of this new PN suggests that RN was not simply the recreation of the old PN, despite continuities between the parties. The UDI, in contrast, was truly new. As discussed

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<sup>3</sup> These included prominent former PN leaders such as Sergio Onofre Jarpa, Francisco Bulnes, Pedro Ibáñez and Sergio Diez. See Valenzuela and Scully (1997: 514), Allamand (1999: 60-66) and Pollack (1999: 111-112).

<sup>4</sup> For example, in his discussion of the Movement of National Unity (MUN), which later fused with other proto-parties to create RN, Allamand (1999: 60-61) explains that one of its objectives was to “ensure that [it] was the natural place for the traditional right, the same right that belonged to the PN,” since, “unlike the UDI, we never renounced the traditional right.”

<sup>5</sup> As Morales and Buguño (2001: 229) put it: “RN...has its leadership origins, though not its program, in the National Party.” While the PN, under the influence of nationalist leaders such as Sergio Onofre Jarpa, had favored a strong role for the state in the economy (Valdivia 2006a: 36-37), RN “clearly identified itself with the economic policy of the Pinochet government” (Angell 2007: 41).

<sup>6</sup> Piñera had previously belonged to the Christian Democratic Party, and as late as 1988 seems to have been willing to support a Christian Democratic candidate for president. Andrés Allamand had belonged to the PN, and had been a student leader—at the high-school level, not university—of the party. Yet Allamand was only seventeen-years-old at the time of the 1973 coup, and was thus hardly an important leader of the PN. On Piñera's roots in the Christian Democratic Party, see “Piñera y sus raíces DC,” *La Tercera*, 22 January 2011. On Allamand's experience in the PN prior to the 1973 coup, see Allamand (1999: 22-27).

<sup>7</sup> According to Durruty (1999: 91), ex-PN deputies and senators from the pre-1973 period “were divided fairly evenly between RN and the PN...” For more on the resurrected PN, see Pollack (1999: 90-91) and Durruty (1999: 85-86, 91, 160-161).

in Chapter 3, few of its leaders had participated in the pre-1973 conservative parties, and they felt virtually no attachment to that tradition—indeed, they felt contempt for it.

Ideologically, the UDI was located on the right of the spectrum. From the beginning, the UDI defined itself according to three core attributes: it was committed to the “social market economy,” it was a party “of Christian inspiration” and it was a “*partido popular*.”<sup>8</sup> The last of these attributes—the UDI’s claim to being a “poor people’s party—was primarily an expression of its strategy for electoral growth, and was discussed in Chapter 3. The other two dimensions were ideological. First, the UDI was in favor of the “social market economy,” the term preferred by many on the right in Latin America for neoliberalism.<sup>9</sup> As Jaime Guzmán explained, this was based on the conviction that “the creative initiative of individuals is the main element that promotes economic and social development,” and it implied an economy that was open to the outside world, supportive of competition, and which assigned a purely “subsidiary” role for the state.<sup>10</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, under the military regime, the *gremialistas* had become increasingly intertwined with the “Chicago Boys,” and had adopted their views on the economy. Under democracy, the UDI continued in this mold, with roll-call voting data indicating that it was “the most systematic defender of market-oriented reforms introduced under the dictatorship” (Luna 2010: 339). Second, the UDI defined itself as a party “of Christian inspiration.” This aspect of the UDI’s identity stemmed from its roots in the *Movimiento Gremial* (see Chapter 3), and it meant that when taking stances on issues of personal morality, such as abortion and divorce, it would turn to

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, “UDI se define como partido ‘popular, de inspiración cristiana y partidario de la economía de mercado,’” *La Segunda*, 14 August 1990, and “Documento de Congreso Doctrinario UDI define alcances de ‘partido popular, con sentido cristiano y por la libertad,’” *La Segunda*, 2 September 1991.

<sup>9</sup> See Boas and Ganse-Morse (2009).

<sup>10</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996).

the “moral thinking” of Christianity as its “frame of reference.”<sup>11</sup> Yet, while it was “a Christian party,” UDI founder Jaime Guzmán was clear that it was “non-confessional,” asserting: “We are not a party linked to any religious confession. We are not a clerical party either, linked to the ecclesiastic hierarchy or any religious confession.”<sup>12</sup> Still, the UDI maintained close links to conservative Catholic groups, such as Opus Dei and the Legionaries of Christ, making it something of a right-wing version of one of its arch-nemeses, the Christian Democrats (Luna et al. 2013).<sup>13</sup> The upshot is that the UDI was clearly on the right of the ideological spectrum, on both the socioeconomic dimension and the dimension that Ostiguy (2009a: 12) calls “attitudes toward order and authority.” In the words of one party founder, the UDI was “liberal on the economy” and “conservative on moral issues.”<sup>14</sup> Consistent with this ideological orientation, the UDI, like RN and the other parties examined in this study, became a member of the Union of Latin American Parties (UPLA), the regional club for right-of center parties.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to being ideologically right-wing, the UDI was a conservative party according to Gibson’s (1996) sociological definition. As Hipsher (1996), Altman (2004) and Luna (2010, 2014) have all demonstrated, the UDI—and its coalition partner, RN, also a conservative party—have consistently performed better electorally with upper-class voters.

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<sup>11</sup> See UDI (1999: 29)

<sup>12</sup> See October 1990 lecture by Jaime Guzmán, reproduced in Guzmán (1996). One consequence of the UDI’s non-confessional character is that it has been able to recruit support among some conservative Protestants (Luna et al. 2013: 925, 932). See also Longueira (2003: 161-162).

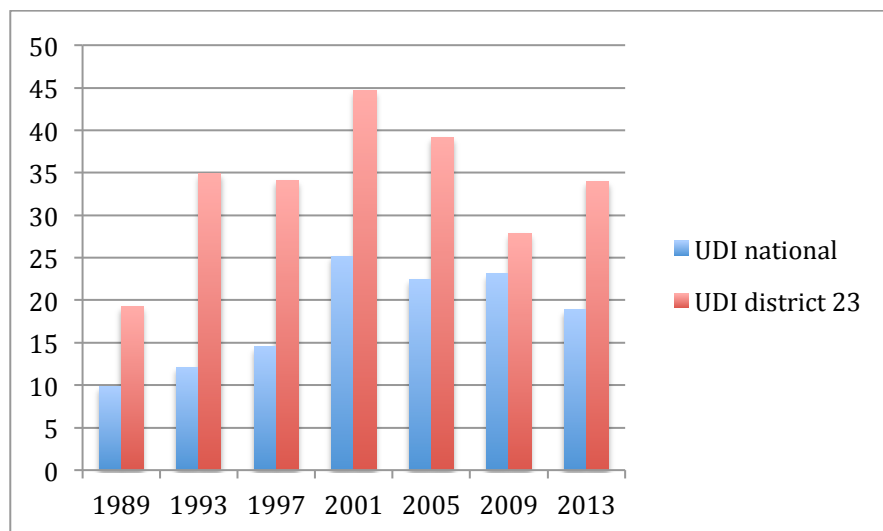
<sup>13</sup> See also Pollack (1999: 117, 132).

<sup>14</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>15</sup> See “UDI en el mundo.” <http://www.udi.cl/website/contenido.php?S=7&SC=14&C=14>. Accessed on 18 June 2014. Moreover, since 2008, the UPLA has been led by UDI senator Jovino Novoa. See “Novoa es elegido presidente de la UPLA,” *La Tercera*, 26 April 2008.

This effect can be seen, to some degree, when looking at electoral patterns in the 1997, 2001 and 2005 elections for Chamber of Deputies in districts representing the richest 10 percent of voters, where the UDI's vote share was between one and two percentage points above its national share (Luna 2010: 337). However, this figure does not adequately capture the strong support for the UDI (and RN) among the very wealthiest Chileans. This can be seen more clearly when comparing the UDI's national vote share with the its share in District 23, the electoral district that contain three municipalities in greater Santiago—Las Condes, Vitacura and Lo Barnechea—that concentrate much of the country's wealth and power in a relatively confined geographical space. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, in this district the UDI has tended to win between 10 and 20 points more than it has on the national level. In several years, the UDI nearly doubled (1989, 1997, 2001) or even trebled (1993) the national average. In short, the UDI was a party whose “core constituency” was “the upper socio-economic segments of Chilean society” (Luna 2010: 325-326).

Figure 4.1. UDI's Support among Economic Elites<sup>16</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Source: Servicio Electoral.

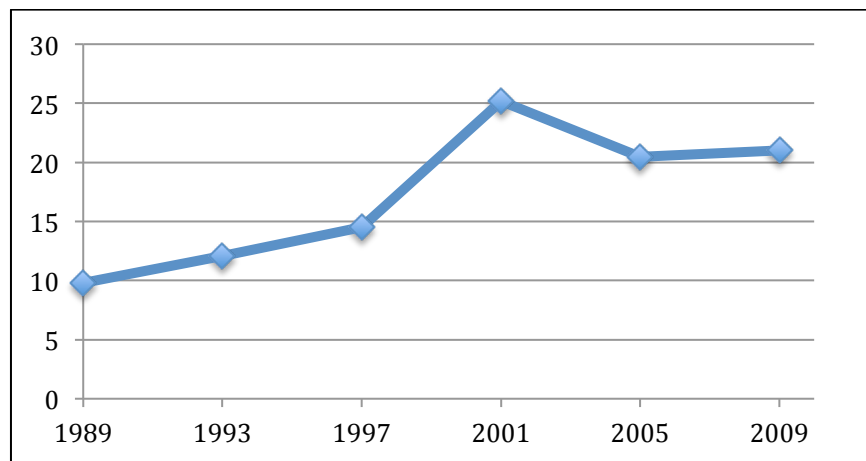
In its intense commitment to the free market and the strong support it enjoyed among the upper strata of society, the UDI bore some resemblance to Argentina's UCEDE (see Chapter 5). Yet the UDI and the UCEDE differed in two key respects. First, the UDI was far more electorally successful than the UCEDE, building an electoral coalition that went well beyond its elite core constituency. The UDI's vote-getting prowess was on display from the time of its electoral debut in 1989, the "founding election" of Chile's new democracy, when it won 9.8 percent of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies. In subsequent legislative elections, the party saw its vote share steadily grow, until it won 25.2 percent in 2001. Its 2001 performance made it the most-voted-for party in the country, and it has held this status in all subsequent elections for Chamber of Deputies (see Figure 4.2).<sup>17</sup> In contrast, Argentina's UCEDE won a mere 1.6 percent in the 1983 election for Chamber of Deputies, its debut election, and in 1989, its strongest performance ever, it won only 9.9 percent—that is, what the UDI won in its *first* election. Much of the difference between the two parties' trajectories can be explained by their unequal abilities to win votes beyond their upper-class core constituencies. Like the UDI (and RN), the UCEDE possessed "a solid command of the upper-class vote" (Gibson 1990: 183) from the beginning. Unlike the UDI, however, the UCEDE began with extremely limited support among non-elite voters, and only managed to expand that support in a limited and gradual manner. The UDI, in contrast, won considerable support from non-elite voters from the beginning. Indeed, several of the UDI deputies elected in 1989 were elected in districts that contained large slums or

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<sup>17</sup> Initially, RN won considerably more votes than the UDI. In 1989, for example, RN won 18.3 percent, nearly double the vote share of the UDI. By 2001, however, the relationship had reversed: the UDI won nearly twice as many votes as RN (25.2 percent to 13.4 percent, respectively). To be sure, both the UDI and RN are clear cases of successful party-building, with both winning well above 10 percent of the vote in five consecutive legislative elections. By the early 2000s, however, the UDI had become the dominant party of the Chilean right.

*poblaciones*,<sup>18</sup> suggesting that the UDI's stated ambition to become a "poor people's party" had an element of truth. This meant that the coalition of voters supporting the UDI had something of a U-shape: "[T]he UDI performs electorally better at both extremes of the social ladder, maintaining a solid base in its core constituency (the upper segments of Chilean society) while making steady inroads into a non-core electoral base (the popular sectors)" (Luna 2010: 336).<sup>19</sup> This broad vote-getting ability not only helped the UDI to become a successful party, but also set it apart from Argentina's UCEDE. In Hipsher's (1996: 24) words: "The UDI's success in winning the support of the poor stands in contrast with the relative failure of the Argentine [UCEDE]...in capturing such support."

Figure 4.2. UDI in Chamber of Deputies Elections (%)<sup>20</sup>



The second major difference was that the UDI was an authoritarian successor party,<sup>21</sup> while the UCEDE was not. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the UCEDE had

<sup>18</sup> See Hipsher (1996: 23-24).

<sup>19</sup> See also Altman (2004).

<sup>20</sup> Source: Servicio Electoral.

<sup>21</sup> The UDI's roots in the military regime have been widely noted by scholars. Scully (1992: 195) describes it as the "direct political descendant of the military regime"; Graham (1994: 40) calls it "the pro-Pinochet party"; Roberts (1998: 145) calls it "ardently pro-Pinochet"; Pollack (1999: 141) says that it is composed of "civilian



relatively strong democratic credentials, having been founded by individuals with few links to Argentina's 1976-1983 military regime. The UDI was very different. As discussed in Chapter 3, it was founded by high-level incumbents of Chile's 1973-1990 military regime, notably Jaime Guzmán, the regime's most influential civilian adviser and the "architect" of its 1980 constitution, and Sergio Fernández, the interior minister and *de facto* "head of cabinet" on two occasions (1978-1982 and 1987-1988). In the 1989 parliamentary elections, 10 of the 14 UDI deputies elected had been military-appointed mayors, and all UDI senators elected in 1989, 1993 and 1997 had held positions during the dictatorship.<sup>22</sup> After democratization, the UDI became the preferred destination for many of the military regime's top leaders. This became especially true after Jaime Guzmán's assassination in 1991 (see below), which prompted multiple former ministers to join the party in solidarity, including Hernán Büchi (finance), José Piñera (labor, mining), Pablo Baraona (economy), Jaime del Valle (justice, foreign relations), Juan Antonio Guzmán (education), Guillermo Arthur (labor) and General (r.) Luis Danús (government).<sup>23</sup> The UDI even incorporated a former member of the

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inheritors of the Pinochet legacy"; Fontaine (2000: 72) describes it as "the most pro-Pinochet party"; Garretón (2000: 61) describes it as "the military regime's direct heir"; Morales and Bugueño (2001: 227) describe it as the "inheritor of the authoritarian regime"; Silva (2001: 28) asserts that it "represents the hard core of *pinochetismo*"; Posner (2004: 72) describes it as "the party most closely linked with the Pinochet legacy"; Valenzuela and Dammert (2006: 71) describe it as the party "on the right most closely identified with military rule"; Angell (2007: 33) describes it as "the party closely identified with the Pinochet government"; Altman (2008: 246) describes it as the party "most loyal to the military regime and its legacy"; Colorado (2009: 81) describes it as "a party totally identified with the Pinochet regime"; Klein (2009: 295) calls it "the de facto 'governmental party' (*partido oficialista*)—if not in name then in spirit—of the military"; Luna (2010: 325) describes it as a "party with strong ties to the former military regime headed by General Augusto Pinochet"; and Etchemendy (2011: 223) calls it the "Pinochetista UDI party."

<sup>22</sup> See Huneeus (2001a: 9).

<sup>23</sup> See Huneeus (2001a: 9, 37), Otano (2006: 215), Pollack (1999: 159) and Durruty (1999: 146). See also "La cosecha de la UDI," *Qué Pasa*, 29 April 1991. It is sometimes claimed that Miguel Ángel Poduje, the former housing minister, also joined the UDI at this time (e.g., Huneeus 2001a: 9). This is incorrect, however. It is true that Poduje was widely known to be an UDI supporter. For example, Poduje was the "general coordinator" of Jaime Guzmán's 1989 senate campaign. However, he never formally joined the UDI. See "Poduje asumió como coordinador general de campaña de J. Guzmán," *La Nación*, 15 September 1989; also

military junta: General (r.) Rodolfo Stange, the ex-general director of the police (*Carabineros*).<sup>24</sup> As Pollack (1999: 159) writes: “With the incorporation of personalities such as Büchi and Piñera, the party could claim to include the principal architects of the military regime’s political, social and economic revolution.” RN also qualifies as an authoritarian successor party, since it was co-founded by Sergio Onofre Jarpa, who had been interior minister during the military regime. Moreover, RN came to include a number of other prominent figures from the dictatorship, including several former ministers and mayors.<sup>25</sup> Between 1989 and 2001, more than half of all RN deputies had occupied positions in the military regime,<sup>26</sup> and in 2014, the party’s declaration of principles still contained language praising the military for its “liberating action of 11 September 1973, which saved the country from the imminent threat of irreversible totalitarianism and foreign domination.”<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, RN’s relationship to the former military regime was always more circumspect than in the case of the UDI: some of its prominent leaders had strong democratic credentials, such as Andrés Allamand and Sebastián Piñera, and it showed a greater willingness to criticize aspects of the military regime. The UDI’s leaders, in contrast, were uniformly linked to the dictatorship, and, “[u]nlike in RN, there is no breast-beating nor any internal debate

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“Por Criticar al Gobierno Militar: Poduje Acusó a Feliú de ‘Electoralismo,’ ” *El Mercurio*, 21 February 1993. Also author’s interviews.

<sup>24</sup> Stange was elected to the senate in 1997 with UDI support and formally joined the party in 2003. See Huneus (2007: 445) and “Reseña Biográfica Parlamentaria: Rodolfo Stange Oelckers”: [http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas\\_parlamentarias/wiki/Rodolfo\\_Stange\\_Oelckers](http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas_parlamentarias/wiki/Rodolfo_Stange_Oelckers). Accessed on 23 June 2014.

<sup>25</sup> See Huneus (2007: 443-444, 487).

<sup>26</sup> See Huneus (2007: 443).

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in “Allamand propone excluir de declaración de principios de RN alusión a gobierno militar,” *La Tercera*, 4 January 2014.

around the issue of loyalty to the military administration” (Pollack 1999: 117).<sup>28</sup> In short, as UDI general secretary (and future presidential candidate) Joaquín Lavín boasted in April 1991 after the incorporation of several high-profile ministers from the military regime: “We have the group most representative of the work of the military government.”<sup>29</sup>

To summarize, the UDI differed from the UCEDE in two key respects: it was far more successful at transcending its upper-class core constituency in elections, and it was an authoritarian successor party. I argue that these two characteristics were linked. Specifically, I argue that the UDI, an authoritarian successor party, benefited from various forms of authoritarian inheritance, which gave it the tools to win votes from a broad swath of the Chilean electorate. In the third section of this chapter, I lay out this argument in detail, examining five resources that the UDI inherited from the military regime and highlighting the various synergies among them. Before discussing these forms of authoritarian inheritance, however, it is necessary to examine the reasons why an authoritarian successor party (or parties, as was the case) was viable in Chile. After all, it is not obvious why a party rooted in a right-wing dictatorship responsible for widespread human rights violations should win many votes, particularly from non-elite voters. As one speaker noted with remarkable frankness at the UDI’s 1991 Doctrinal Congress: “Coming from the upper class, coming from the university and linked to a harsh military government, the UDI certainly did not have the way paved for it to the popular sectors...”<sup>30</sup> In order to understand why the UDI’s party-building project was viable, and why conservative party formation in Chile, in

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<sup>28</sup> For more on the different positions of the RN and the UDI toward the dictatorship, see Scully (1992: 194-195); Valenzuela and Scully (1997: 514); Espíndola (2002: 116-117); Angell (2007: 41, 78); and Altman (2008: 246).

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in “La cosecha de la UDI,” *Qué Pasa*, 29 April 1991.

<sup>30</sup> Juan de Dios Vial Larraín, quoted in Longueira (2003: 174).

contrast to Argentina, overlapped with authoritarian successor party formation, it is necessary to look at two antecedent conditions related to Chile's authoritarian regime.

### Antecedent Conditions

In order to understand why a conservative authoritarian successor party such as that of the UDI was viable in Chile, it is necessary to look at two of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: the level of threat prior to the onset of authoritarian rule and the performance of the authoritarian regime. First, the level of threat in Chile was extraordinarily high. In this study, I operationalize level of threat by asking a simple question: did the radical left actually take power in the country in question? In Chile, the answer is an unambiguous "yes." As discussed in Chapter 3, this came in the form of the government of Salvador Allende, the leader of a coalition of leftist parties called the Popular Unity who was elected president in September 1970. Despite winning only a plurality of the vote, Allende immediately set out to realize a revolutionary socialist transformation of the Chilean economy. In the tumultuous three years that followed, the gulf between those who supported and those who opposed Allende became so vast that Chile essentially became "a nation of enemies" (Constable and Valenzuela 1991). The term "polarization" is often used to describe this period,<sup>31</sup> but it is worth spelling out exactly what this means: while millions of Chileans passionately supported Allende, millions of others despised him and were deeply traumatized by the experience of his government. The traumatic experience of the Allende years for many Chileans would powerfully shape their perception of the military regime. In

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<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Sartori (2005: 141-144) and Valenzuela (1978: 62-63).

Silva's (1999: 172) words, the experience of the Allende years had "a deep psychological impact," and it "would be almost impossible for an outsider to understand [many Chileans'] conspicuous, uncritical and passionate support for the military government, if the political effects of this trauma are not taken into account." The result was that when Allende was overthrown by the military in September 1973, many greeted the coup with relief.<sup>32</sup>

The experience of the Allende government, and the belief by many Chileans that it constituted a fundamental threat to their way of life, contributed to the eventual formation of a viable authoritarian successor party in two ways. First, it increased the "negative legitimacy" of the military regime. As the term suggests, this is a form of legitimacy based on what an authoritarian regime opposes—in this case, the Allende government.<sup>33</sup> One reason that many Chileans opposed the Popular Unity government was because of its failure to provide many basic public goods, especially with respect to the economy. As Huneus (2007: 271) explains: "The economy was a political issue because the Popular Unity government's poor performance had been one of the reasons for the crisis and collapse of democracy... That failure had been apparent not only in serious macroeconomic imbalances (hyperinflation, deficits in the balance of payments, and fiscal accounts), but also in shortages of basic goods that affected much of the population. For the public, the long queues of people waiting to buy basic goods, and the black market, were the most visible evidence of a serious crisis." The economic crisis under Allende was caused by many factors, including domestic and international sabotage.<sup>34</sup> However, much of it was the result, in the

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<sup>32</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 29-30); Loveman (2001: 266); and Huneus (2007: 244).

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of "negative legitimacy," see Huntington (1991: 49-50) and Chapter 2 of this study.

<sup>34</sup> See Kornbluh (2003); Valenzuela (1978: 62-63); and Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 200).

words of one prominent Socialist leader, of the government's "blatant mismanagement of the economy" (Muñoz 2008: 34).<sup>35</sup> While Chilean elites were the most obvious sectors of society affected by Allende's economic policies, middle-class and popular-sector Chileans were also affected.<sup>36</sup> As Margaret Power (2002) has documented, the economic crisis was particularly hard on Chilean women, since they were the ones who had to endure the long lines and food shortages: "Many women's sharpest memory of the Unidad Popular (UP, Popular Unity) years, from 1970 to 1973, is that of standing in lines to buy food for their families." Low-income women were particularly affected by shortages and lines: "The burden was not shared equally by all women; it fell most heavily on the shoulders of middle-class and poor women. Elite women had money to purchase goods on the black market (and could afford to hoard them as well)" (Power 2002: 6). The result was that many Chileans, both elite and non-elite, became fierce opponents of the Allende government.

Another reason that many Chileans opposed the Allende government was that they feared that Chile would become a Marxist dictatorship. While Allende himself was a committed democrat, this was not true for all members of the Popular Unity coalition. Indeed, Allende's own Socialist Party had declared in 1967 that "peaceful or legal forms of struggle...do not lead by themselves to power. The Socialist Party considers them to be limited instruments of action, incorporated into the political process that carries us to armed struggle."<sup>37</sup> During his presidency, Allende had shown "paternalistic tolerance" toward the armed Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) and allowed Fidel Castro to visit Chile

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<sup>35</sup> Loveman (2001: 259) concurs: "Whatever the full extent of United States complicity in the tragedy of September 1973, and whatever the impact of international economics, the most critical factor of all in the failure of the Allende administration was bad politics and unrealistic economic policies."

<sup>36</sup> See Valenzuela (1995: 24, 26), Silva (1999: 173) and Huneus (2007: 244).

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Roberts (1998: 92).

for three weeks in 1971 (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 25, 50).<sup>38</sup> All of this, combined with the rapid nationalization of huge swaths of the economy, contributed to the perception, often repeated by UDI leaders, that Allende's true goal was to convert Chile into a "second Cuba."<sup>39</sup> In sum, the deep dysfunction of the economy under Allende, and fears that he intended to impose leftist totalitarianism on Chile, meant that the military regime that took power in 1973 was able to draw, especially at first, on significant stores of negative legitimacy.<sup>40</sup> While no polls were taken, Loveman (2001: 266) expresses the view of many when he writes: "In the period 1973 to 1975, the junta seemed to have the support of a majority of Chileans in the effort to restore political order and reconstruct the economy."<sup>41</sup>

In addition to bolstering the military regime's negative legitimacy, the threat posed by the Allende government increased the likelihood that a viable authoritarian successor party would eventually form by encouraging collective action in support of the regime by powerful actors, particularly business. During the 1970-1973 period, the Chilean business community was extremely hostile to the Allende government. The reason for this hostility was straightforward: "Unidad Popular's rhetoric and practice identified them as a class enemy

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<sup>38</sup> Part of this "paternalistic tolerance" may have stemmed from the fact that his nephew, Pascal Allende, was one of the founders of the MIR (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 25).

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Longueira (2003: 78).

<sup>40</sup> The left's actions after the coup further bolstered fears of a leftist dictatorship. Concluding that peaceful methods were no longer viable, the traditionally peaceful Communist Party formed the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front, a guerrilla group that carried out thousands of bombings and acts of sabotage during the 1980s, and that nearly succeeded in assassinating Pinochet in 1986 (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 111-112, 265, 293-294; Roberts 1998: 107-111). Even the Socialist Party, which after democratization would become a moderate social democratic party, mostly supported armed insurrection during this period (Roberts 1998: 124-126). All of this contributed to old fears of "Cubanization," and, while "never a military threat to the junta, the existence of these cadres and the publicized operations they carried out unintentionally served the military regime's purposes by demonstrating that 'terrorists' and 'guerrillas' were not merely an invention of government propagandists" (Loveman 2001: 300). Even after the transition to democracy, violent attacks by radical leftists continued for some time—as seen, most notably, in the April 1991 assassination of Jaime Guzmán.

<sup>41</sup> See also Huneus (2007: 244).

and strove to break their power through nationalization” (Silva 1996: 42). As a result, “[n]o group of Chileans supported the coup as strongly as did the business community, which felt its very survival to be at stake” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 200).<sup>42</sup> Business’ support for the military regime in Chile was not unique; other military regimes in Latin America at the time enjoyed similar support. What *was* unique was that the relationship between business and the regime never broke down in Chile. In contrast to Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, where parts of the private sector defected from the authoritarian coalition during the debt crisis beginning in 1982 and, in so doing, helped to trigger a transition to democracy, business in Chile grumbled<sup>43</sup> but ultimately remained loyal.<sup>44</sup> One of the major reasons for this continued support for military rule was the harrowing memory of the Allende years. As Frieden (1991) explains: “The business community...had been traumatized by their brush with socialism and were adamant about the overriding need to avoid a return to mass labor militancy and threats to property. Class fear eclipsed sectoral concerns; class fear drove business to support a ruthless military regime” (Frieden 1991: 150-151).<sup>45</sup> This loyalty

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<sup>42</sup> Business not only supported the coup, but also played a role in making it a reality. For example, it carried out social mobilization and economic sabotage, and the leaders of Chile’s major business associations became “active coup conspirators” (Schneider 2004: 163). As the former president of one such association later recalled: “At first we tried to coexist with Allende, to give him the benefit of the doubt, but by the end of 1971 we realized he wanted to implant a dictatorship of the proletariat. From then on, our view was to destabilize the government... We didn’t know precisely when the explosion would come, but we kept putting more wood and paper on the fire. Eventually, they were bound to ignite.” For more on the role of business in instigating the 1973 coup, see Valenzuela (1978: 78); Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 200-201); and Silva (1996: 40-56).

<sup>43</sup> During the 1982-1983 economic crisis, it seemed possible that parts of the private sector might abandon the military regime. Faced with the country’s economic collapse and the apparent indifference of the military authorities to its plight, parts of the business community publicly criticized aspects of the regime’s economic policy. Ultimately, however, the Chilean private sector, unlike its counterparts in neighboring countries, never actually crossed the line and joined the opposition. See Campero (1995) and Silva (1996: 173-87, 215-226).

<sup>44</sup> On the defection of business elites in several countries versus the continuing loyalty of business elites in Chile, see Frieden (1991) and Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 45-108).

<sup>45</sup> For an alternative explanation, see Silva (1996). He argues that the most important factor in ensuring the continued loyalty of Chilean business to the military regime was the regime’s turn to “pragmatic neoliberalism” and the post-1983 inclusion of business in the economic policymaking process. According to his account,



helped the regime to ride out the 1982-1983 economic crisis and, as a result, to end on a “high note” in the late 1980s.<sup>46</sup> To summarize, the high level of threat in Chile prior to the onset of military rule increased the likelihood of a viable authoritarian successor party eventually forming in two ways: it increased the negative legitimacy of the authoritarian regime, and it ensured business loyalty to the regime during tough times.

The second critical antecedent that helps to explain the viability of authoritarian successor party formation in Chile is the performance of the authoritarian regime. Here the difference between Chile and Argentina was particularly stark. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the 1976-1983 military regime in Argentina, like its Chilean counterpart, was extraordinarily violent, carrying out massive repression against the country’s population. But in addition to committing widespread human rights abuses, the Argentine regime was also an utter failure in terms of governance. Most obviously, it launched a disastrous invasion of the British-controlled Falkland/Malvinas Islands, which led to a humiliating military defeat at the hands of Great Britain. In addition, its economic performance was extremely bad, with both economic contraction and high inflation. The performance of the Chilean military regime was much better. It did not lose any international wars, and it had a relatively strong economic record. To be sure, accounts of the “Chilean miracle” have been exaggerated, as Domínguez (1998: 71) rightly notes. The 1982-1983 debt crisis was more extreme in Chile than anywhere else in the region, and if one takes this into account and looks at the economy between 1981 and 1990, one finds an average annual growth rate of only one percent

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fearing that the private sector would join forces with the moderate opposition, Pinochet conceded and gave it greater policymaking access in order to keep it within the authoritarian fold.

<sup>46</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 5, the situation in Argentina was very different, where the perception of a lower level of threat contributed to business’ defection during the economic crisis, which in turn contributed to the military’s exit from power in an unplanned and ignominious manner.

(Domínguez 1998: 71). Then again, one-percent annual growth during the “lost decade” of the 1980s, when most economies in Latin America were experiencing either stagnation or negative growth, was comparatively good.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, while many countries in Latin America suffered high inflation during the 1980s, inflation in Chile was relatively low.<sup>48</sup> Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Chilean regime ended on a high note. In their study of the political economy of democratic transitions, Haggard and Kaufman (1995) collected data on the economic performances of several authoritarian regimes in the years prior to democratization. In Argentina, average annual growth for the last five full years of authoritarian rule was -1.5 percent and average annual inflation was 141.0 percent.<sup>49</sup> In Chile, in contrast, average annual growth for the last five full years of authoritarian rule was 6.2 percent and average annual inflation was 20.4 percent.<sup>50</sup> The upshot is that the Chilean military regime, in addition to benefiting from the negative legitimacy of having “rescued” the country from the Allende government, also earned a more positive kind of legitimacy from its relatively strong performance in office. To again quote the Socialist politician mentioned above: “Most Latin American military dictatorships ran disastrous economies. Pinochet’s was the exception” (Muñoz 2008: 306). He continues: “The bottom line for

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<sup>47</sup> For example, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela each experienced cumulative drops in per capita income of more than 20 percent during the decade of the 1980s; Chile, in contrast, experienced 8 percent cumulative growth in per capita income during the same period (Psacharopoulos et al. 1997: 24).

<sup>48</sup> During the 1980s, average annual inflation in Latin America was above 150 percent (Naím 1994: 32). In Chile, in contrast, average annual inflation was 20.8 percent, and never went above 30.7 percent. Author’s calculation based on World Bank data: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.DEFL.KD.ZG>. Accessed on 19 June 2014.

<sup>49</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 175).

<sup>50</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 176).

Pinochet supporters is that, despite his sins, ‘he made the trains run on time,’ as Mussolini used to be praised. ‘They’re not completely wrong’ (Muñoz 2008: 308).

To conclude, in this section I have examined two critical antecedents that help to explain why the formation of an authoritarian successor party was a viable project in Chile. First, because many Chileans believed that the Allende government had represented an extraordinary threat, the military regime benefited from significant levels of negative legitimacy, and was also able to retain the support of the private sector during the 1982-1983 economic crisis. Second, because of its relatively strong performance, particularly on the economy, the regime benefited from significant amounts of positive legitimacy. For these reasons, the Chilean dictatorship had a “bedrock of popular support” (Valenzuela 1995: 24) throughout its existence.<sup>51</sup> As a result, a party claiming to represent the legacy of the dictatorship could be expected to be the beneficiary of considerable amounts of authoritarian inheritance. To be sure, it would also be burdened with authoritarian baggage, given the massive human rights violations committed by the Chilean dictatorship. As will be discussed in the next section, this constituted a heavy burden for the UDI, and made voting for the party unthinkable for many—probably most—Chileans. Nevertheless, given the painful memories of the Allende years and the relatively strong performance of the military regime, this authoritarian baggage would be partially offset by a significant amount of authoritarian inheritance. This meant that, on balance, a party like the UDI could be expected to be viable. As a result, authoritarian incumbents had a strong incentive to throw their hats into the electoral ring, and economic elites could support them without

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<sup>51</sup> See also Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 29-30); Linz and Stepan (1996: 224-225); Loveman (2001: 226, 296); Torcal and Mainwaring (2003: 83); Angell (2007: 5, 140-141, 154); and Huneus (2007: 73, 244).

committing political suicide. This was a recipe for the formation of a conservative authoritarian successor party.

### Authoritarian Inheritance

In the previous section, I examined two critical antecedents that increased the likelihood that an authoritarian successor party (or parties) would emerge in Chile. I argued that because of the high level of threat represented by the Allende government, and the relatively strong performance of the military regime, a party that grew out of that regime could expect to benefit from a significant amount of authoritarian inheritance. In this section, I examine five forms of authoritarian inheritance from which the UDI benefited: (1) a party brand, (2) clientelistic networks, (3) territorial organization, (4) business connections and (5) a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. I demonstrate that these five inherited resources—and the various synergies among them—were crucial for allowing the UDI to overcome the main challenge of conservative party-building: the construction of a multiclass electoral coalition. I also briefly discuss RN, which was also an authoritarian successor party, and which also benefited from authoritarian inheritance. However, I argue that for RN the effect of authoritarian inheritance was less significant, for two reasons. First, because RN was partially built upon the foundation of the old PN, it was not as dependent on authoritarian inheritance as the UDI. Second, because RN made a greater effort to distance itself from the military regime, it deprived itself of some forms of authoritarian inheritance, particularly the brand of *Pinochetismo* and business connections.

The first resource that the UDI inherited from the military regime was a brand. As discussed in Chapter 2, the establishment of a brand that is widely known, popular and distinct from other parties is one of the key determinants of successful party-building. As an authoritarian successor party, the UDI was able to avoid the difficulties of building a brand from scratch by simply inheriting one that already existed: *Pinochetismo*. As Chile's other authoritarian successor, RN also had some claim to this brand. However, for both strategic reasons,<sup>52</sup> and because of the existence of important party leaders who had not participated in the military regime (e.g., Andrés Allamand, Sebastián Piñera), RN began to distance itself from *Pinochetismo* soon after the transition.<sup>53</sup> The UDI was very different. Far from distancing itself from its origins, the UDI took every opportunity to demonstrate publicly—and sometimes ostentatiously—its association with the military regime. Thus, on 11 September 1990, the UDI marked the anniversary of the 1973 coup against Allende by presenting a letter of appreciation to General Pinochet and other former members of the

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<sup>52</sup> According to RN co-founder Andrés Allamand, there were debates in RN in its early years about how to position the party vis-à-vis Pinochet and the military regime, with some believing that it should fully embrace this legacy. As Allamand (1999: 216) explains: "In the interior of RN, there were two visions. One proposed a close defense of the military government in the face of any attempt at change... The other proposed a politics of agreements with the new government. There were also disagreements about who was the [party's] immediate political 'rival.' Some argued that the most important thing was not to let the UDI...capitalize on the support for '*Pinochetismo*'; others among us thought that the most important thing was to go out and conquer the independent electorate and the center... Competing with the UDI, we would only become more right-wing, but we would not win a single additional member." Ultimately, the party opted to distance somewhat itself from *Pinochetismo*, which it believed would help it to win votes from centrist Christian Democrats (Allamand 1999: 222-223). Not everyone in RN supported this approach. Among those who opposed it was RN co-founder and former interior minister during the military regime, Sergio Onofre Jarpa, who resigned from the party in 1997 (Allamand 1999: 527-528).

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, "Pinochet divide a la derecha: Por qué RN no celebró el 11," *Hoy*, 17-23 September 1990. See also Scully (1992: 194-195); Valenzuela and Scully (1997: 514); Pollack (1999: 115, 117); Espíndola (2002: 116-7); Angell (2007: 41, 78); and Altman (2008: 246).

military junta, and holding a series of public celebrations.<sup>54</sup> The party repeated this gesture the following year, celebrating and attempting “to award Pinochet and his most prominent ministers with the Jaime Guzmán Medal” (Otano 2006: 234).<sup>55</sup> The UDI repeatedly made public declarations of its support for the military regime, and campaigned on the issue at election time. A pamphlet from Jaime Guzmán’s successful 1989 bid for the Senate, for example, shows a photo of Guzmán and Pinochet embracing, below which is written: “Jaime Guzmán has collaborated patriotically with the current [military] government, being one of the main creators of the new democratic institutions.”<sup>56</sup> In an August 1990 op-ed entitled “The Example of Pinochet,” Guzmán thanks Pinochet for “having led the liberation of the fatherland,” and gushes about his “mixture of military valor and Christian humility, which testify in an exemplary manner to the true greatness of his soul.”<sup>57</sup> In short, the UDI went out of its way to highlight its close links to the military regime and to Pinochet.

Over time, the UDI made some tepid and gradual moves to deemphasize its links to the dictatorship. In the 1999-2000 presidential elections, for example, the UDI candidate, Joaquín Lavín, made gestures toward critics of the dictatorship by visiting the families of the “disappeared,” supporting the right of the courts to investigate human rights abuses and backing some reforms to the 1980 constitution.<sup>58</sup> Yet the extent of this change should not

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<sup>54</sup> This episode is discussed in the introduction of Chapter 2. For a description of the UDI’s 11 September celebrations after democratization, see Pollack (1999: 141-142).

<sup>55</sup> The award was created in order to honor Guzmán, who, as described below, had been assassinated in April 1991. Ultimately, the UDI was prevented from presenting Pinochet with the Jaime Guzmán Medal by the defense minister, who asserted that the gesture “dangerously crossed the line of apoliticism of our armed forces.” Instead, the UDI gave Pinochet a photo of an overturned statue of Lenin in the USSR. See “El Gobierno chileno impide que un partido de derechas condecere a Pinochet,” *El País*, 12 September 1991.

<sup>56</sup> See “Jaime Guzmán: Chile necesita un gran senador.” Pamphlet from Guzmán’s 1989 electoral bid.

<sup>57</sup> See “El ejemplo de Pinochet,” *La Tercera*, 26 August 1990.

<sup>58</sup> See Fontaine (2000: 73), Silva (2001: 28-29), Angell (2007: 96, 117, 155), and Colorado (2009).

be overstated. By choosing Lavín as its presidential candidate, the UDI was hardly choosing someone remote from the dictatorship: Lavín had occupied an administrative position during the military regime, written a book extolling the achievements of the regime and visited Pinochet while he was in detention in London.<sup>59</sup> More importantly, the UDI, as a party, never disowned the regime. In the words of one former UDI president: “We changed discourse without renouncing what we had been. We have never renounced it. Instead, we have moved it discreetly to the background [laughter].”<sup>60</sup> Even this claim is somewhat exaggerated. For example, in a self-published history of the UDI timed to coincide with the 1999-2000 presidential election, there is an entire section entitled “Collaboration with the Military Government,” which begins with the words: “From the first moment, Guzmán and his collaborators understood that they had to support and form part of the new government of the armed forces.”<sup>61</sup> Similarly, in a book published in 2003 while he was president of the UDI, Pablo Longueira quotes a speaker at the party’s 1991 Doctrinal Congress who asserted: “The UDI was raised in the military government and should feel honored to have contributed with abnegation, loyalty and efficacy to the notable transformation of our country brought about by this government.”<sup>62</sup> In November 2011, the UDI mayor of the wealthy Santiago municipality of Providencia, Cristián Labbé, held a public event to honor Miguel Krassnoff, a former member of the dictatorship’s feared secret police,<sup>63</sup> who had

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<sup>59</sup> On Lavín, see Fontaine (2000), Silva (2001) and Angell (2007: 87-111). See also Lavín (1986).

<sup>60</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

<sup>61</sup> See UDI (1999).

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Longueira (2003: 174).

<sup>63</sup> This was the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA). The DINA has been described as “the Chilean gestapo” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 91). For a detailed examination of the DINA, see Policzer (2009).

been sentenced to life in prison for human rights violations.<sup>64</sup> Labbé himself had been a member of the DINA, the head of Pinochet's security detail and a minister (1989-1990) during the military regime. Similarly, in June 2012, UDI deputy Iván Moreira wished the deceased Pinochet a happy Father's Day on Twitter—because, in his words, he was “the father of the nation [*patria*]”—and assured him that “your faithful children remember you fondly.”<sup>65</sup> In short, the UDI fully and enthusiastically embraced the brand of *Pinochetismo* after the transition to democracy, and largely continued to do so more than two decades later.

Why would the leaders of the UDI embrace the brand of a dictatorship that had killed and tortured thousands of Chileans? In part, they had no choice. In the words of one former UDI president: “For us, defending the military government was not only something that we openly chose; rather, our own life demonstrated it. We worked for that government! How am I going to say, ‘Now we have nothing to do with the military government’? It is impossible to deny.”<sup>66</sup> However, while this factor might explain why UDI leaders never renounced the military regime, it does not explain why they embraced it with such gusto. They did so because they believed it would win them support. And it would win them support because the military regime was popular. In the 1988 plebiscite to determine whether Pinochet should remain in power, 44 percent voted in favor of this option. This was more than the right had won in the years prior to the breakdown of democracy and, as UDI leaders like to point out, it was considerably more than what Salvador Allende won

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<sup>64</sup> See “Chile decide el futuro político del último portavoz de Pinochet,” *El País*, 29 October 2012.

<sup>65</sup> See “Diputado Iván Moreira envió saludo a Pinochet en día del Padre,” *Emol.com*, 17 June 2012. <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2012/06/17/546058/diputado-moreira-saluda-a-pinochet-en-dia-del-padre-tus-fieles-hijos-te-recuerdan-con-carino.html>. Accessed on 20 June 2014.

<sup>66</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.



when he was elected president in 1973.<sup>67</sup> To be sure, Pinochet lost the plebiscite, which demonstrated that the majority of the population did not support the military regime. Yet, the results indicated that a very large minority did support the dictatorship, and the UDI explicitly set out to convert support for the dictatorship into support for itself.<sup>68</sup>

UDI leaders believe that the *Pinochetista* brand won them votes. To be sure, they admit that the regime's human rights record hurt them with many voters, and thus constituted a significant form of authoritarian baggage for the party, or a "heavy burden."<sup>69</sup> One former UDI deputy recalls that the left, believing that an association with the dictatorship was a liability, called him a "representative of the dictatorship," a "little dictator," and even a "little Pinocho," in reference to a common slur for Pinochet.<sup>70</sup> On balance, however, UDI leaders believe that being perceived as "children of the dictatorship"<sup>71</sup> was an asset, especially in the early years of democracy. As one UDI deputy explained when asked whether its association with the military regime hurt or helped the party:<sup>72</sup>

Both. But I think that at the initial stage, when we were just entering the electoral period...it helped us. It helped us to pick up the electorate of the right that supported the military government. Remember that in the plebiscite, the president, General Pinochet, got around 43, 44 percent of the vote, which is a lot for a "dictator" after seventeen years. There was support. That is, there was a hard core of support, which was crosscutting [*transversal*], because Pinochet was not from the traditional right. So, I think that electorate also saw a lot in the UDI, in the sense of: "Those guys were there. They were the ones who were loyal to the military government." It helped us. On the other hand, yes, obviously it hurt us in the sense

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<sup>67</sup> See, for example, Longueira (2003: 35).

<sup>68</sup> See "UDI Llamó a Convertir Alto Apoyo al 'Sí' en Fuerza Cívica Decisiva," *El Mercurio*, 7 October 1988.

<sup>69</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>70</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 22 November 2011.

that much of the electorate of the right—the more “democratic” right, if you like—criticized us for this very fact. But on balance, I think that at that moment, it helped us. Electorally, it was a plus for us, especially in that first election [1989].

In short, UDI leaders believe that their association with the dictatorship ensured them a “pillar of support”<sup>73</sup> and a “starting base,”<sup>74</sup> which allowed them to demonstrate that theirs was a serious party and, in the process, to lay the foundation for future growth.

The notion that attaching itself to the *Pinochetista* brand may have been a viable strategy for the UDI is supported by survey data. Surveys since the return to democracy in 1990 have consistently shown that a large minority of Chileans continue to hold positive views of the former dictatorship, suggesting the potential gains of going after “the *Pinochetista* vote.” The fact that UDI supporters, by very large margins, express positive views of the former dictatorship suggests that the party has actually achieved this goal. For example, in December 2001, when asked whether they were “in favor of or against the coup d’état of 11 September 1973,” 30 percent responded that they were in favor; among UDI supporters, however, the figure was 61 percent (Huneus 2003: 37). In July 2003, when asked to describe the events of 11 September 1973, 30 percent described the coup as a “liberation from Marxism” and 56 percent described it as the “destruction of democracy”; among UDI supporters, however, 71 percent described it as a “liberation from Marxism” and only 21 percent described it as the “destruction of democracy” (Huneus 2003: 50). Polls during the 1990s and early 2000s asking Chileans to evaluate the seventeen years of military rule showed that between 23 and 32 percent of the population viewed these years as “good or very good”; among UDI supporters, however, the figure oscillated between 58 and 78 percent

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<sup>73</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

<sup>74</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 23 November 2011.

(Huneus 2003: 56). All of this reinforces Torcal and Mainwaring's (2003: 83) finding about the nature of the Chilean party system since the transition to democracy: "The post-1989 Chilean party system has been fundamentally structured by specifically political variables resulting from the authoritarian regime and the democratic transition. The cleavage between those who supported military rule and those who opposed it stands out above all else." By hewing unequivocally to one side of this regime cleavage, the UDI appears to have won the votes of many Chileans who viewed the military regime positively.

The UDI's embrace of the brand of *Pinochetismo* helped the party to win the support of non-elite voters in both direct and indirect ways. First, the UDI sought to win the support of poor voters by invoking negative memories of the Allende experience, and, concomitantly, positive memories of the stability provided by military rule. In July 1990, for example, the UDI began screening a video called "The Whole Truth" in slums or *poblaciones*, in which it reminded viewers of the chaos of the Allende years and praised the work of the military regime.<sup>75</sup> This campaign was explicitly linked to a drive to increase the number of UDI affiliates in *poblaciones*, suggesting that the party believed it could win votes in such areas by appealing to those with sympathy for the military regime. Second, and arguably even more importantly, the UDI invoked *Pinochetismo* to appeal to wealthy Chileans and the private sector, which it could then tap for donations in order to fund clientelistic payouts to poorer voters. This was an example of what Luna (2010, 2014) calls "segmented party-voter linkages," whereby a party seeks the support of one group of voters through a certain kind of appeal, and another group of voters through a different kind of appeal. In the case of the UDI, the party appealed to its upper-class core constituency by emphasizing its roots in the

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<sup>75</sup> See "Exhibirá Video en Poblaciones: UDI Inicia Campaña para Debatir Hechos de 1973," *El Mercurio*, 29 June 1990, and "La UDI lanza campaña con un video sobre 'crisis del 73,'" *Las Últimas Noticias*, 29 June 1990.

military regime and its loyalty to the regime's programmatic legacy. In June 1990, for example, the UDI ran a two-page party advertisement in *El Mercurio*, also under the title "The Whole Truth," which contained two photos reminding readers of what had supposedly preceded military rule: one showed Salvador Allende pointing a Kalashnikov at an unidentified target, and another showed a man with a hardhat and a bandana over his face beating a police officer with a baton.<sup>76</sup> The text explains that the military regime had saved Chile from a "totalitarian Marxist attempt," and declares: "We [the UDI] were supporters of the previous [military] government, and we proclaim it openly and proudly."<sup>77</sup> Since *El Mercurio* is a conservative newspaper widely read by Chilean elites but unlikely to have a large readership in poorer sectors, it can be inferred that this advertisement was targeting elites—elites that had strongly backed the military regime, and that had been wary of a return to democracy.<sup>78</sup> These sectors had few votes to contribute, but they did have other kinds of resources at their disposal, which, as discussed in the next section, would help the UDI to win the support of non-elite voters through a second kind of appeal: clientelism.

### *Clientelistic Networks*

The second resource that the UDI inherited from the military regime came in the form of clientelistic networks. The party's inheritance of these networks can be traced back to two closely related aspects of the dictatorship: municipal government and social policy. As discussed in an earlier section, one of the major institutional changes undertaken by the

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<sup>76</sup> See "La Verdad Completa," *El Mercurio*, 16 June 1990.

<sup>77</sup> See "La Verdad Completa," *El Mercurio*, 16 June 1990.

<sup>78</sup> See Shirley Christian, "Chile's Elite Seeks 'Soft Landing,'" *The New York Times*, 9 August 1987.

military regime was “municipalization.”<sup>79</sup> Historically, municipal governments in Chile had possessed little formal power but had been chosen through competitive elections.<sup>80</sup> During the dictatorship, this pattern was reversed: much responsibility was devolved to the municipalities, but mayors were now appointed rather than elected. The increase in responsibility was dramatic: “Whereas municipal responsibilities before 1973 were essentially limited to street cleaning and garbage collection (*aseo y ornato*), under Pinochet the municipalities acquired critical responsibilities, most importantly in the areas of education and health care” (Eaton 2004: 230). Municipal governments also came to play a key role in the administration of anti-poverty subsidies, emergency employment schemes and low-income housing. Along with these new responsibilities, municipalities saw a concomitant increase in the size of their budgets: between 1979 and 1983, municipal budgets quadrupled and municipal spending as a percentage of all public spending increased from 4 percent to 19 percent (Klein 2004: 306). Yet mayors were no longer elected; instead, they were appointed and “served as the direct agents of the center and at Pinochet’s pleasure” (Eaton 2004: 230). According to Pinochet, the mayor was “the representative of the President of the Republic at the local level.”<sup>81</sup> The result of these reforms was an odd mix of political centralization and administrative decentralization, with mayors being transformed into powerful “authoritarian bureaucrats” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 237).

At the same time that the military regime was devolving a host of new administrative responsibilities to municipal governments, it was also carrying out dramatic reforms to social

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<sup>79</sup> For accounts of “municipalization,” see Graham (1994: 45-48); Raczynski and Romaguera (1995: 302-305); Loveman (2001: 285); Eaton (2004: 229-230); Klein (2004: 304-309); Huneeus (2007: 256-257); and Valdivia (2012).

<sup>80</sup> See Valenzuela (1977).

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Klein (2004: 305).

policy.<sup>82</sup> These reforms were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The most obvious quantitative change was simple retrenchment, with deep cuts to social spending, both as a percentage of GDP and in per capita terms.<sup>83</sup> Yet, while no one would accuse it of generosity, “[t]he military government was far from oblivious to the plight of the poor, and Pinochet championed policies aimed at helping the neediest” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 230). To this end, policymakers—most importantly, the *gremialistas* and Chicago Boys who dominated the Organization of National Planning (ODEPLAN)—introduced major qualitative changes to how social policy was conducted, with the ideal of universal coverage being replaced with means-testing and targeted spending. In the 1970s, they created a “Map of Extreme Poverty” and later a formal social stratification index that were used to determine who was eligible for social assistance.<sup>84</sup> This shift toward targeted spending was rooted in both moral and pragmatic considerations. For Miguel Kast, for example, the Chicago Boy and *gremialista* who became the director of ODEPLAN, “the war on poverty was both a moral and a technical challenge. Kast believed that, in the past, income redistribution had been unfairly tilted toward middle-class ‘pressure groups,’ such as university students” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 230). But there were also more pragmatic considerations. The most obvious was cost, with “targeting originat[ing] as a technique for continuing to subsidise the poorest section of society in the context of generalised cutbacks in social expenditure” (Taylor 2006: 83). The other was the

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<sup>82</sup> For accounts of social policy reforms during the dictatorship, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 230-231); Graham (1994); Raczynski and Romaguera (1995); Castiglioni (2001, 2005); Taylor (2006: 77-99); Etchemendy (2011: 221-253); and Huneus (2007: 257-258).

<sup>83</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 223, 233); Oxhorn (1995: 73); Castiglioni (2001, 2005); Taylor (2006: 78-81); and Etchemendy (2011: 228).

<sup>84</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 231); Taylor (2006: 81-83); Huneus (2007: 295); and Posner (2008: 146-147).

construction of popular support. According to Etchemendy (2011), the new approach was part of a conscious strategy to build support for the military regime despite economic disruptions caused by neoliberal reforms—a strategy he calls “compensating outsiders.” Believing it was impossible to build support among labor unions and businesses traditionally dependent on the state, both of which were bound to be hurt by the shift to a free-market economy, “the only sector in which it seemed plausible to create a popular base of support was that of the atomized poor and the unemployed” (Etchemendy 2011: 240-241).

Mayors played a key role in administering the new social policies. In addition to becoming responsible for health and education, “[t]he distribution of housing and family subsidies, as well as the administration of various employment schemes set up by the military regime to alleviate the rising poverty, especially amongst the *pobladores*, had also been turned over to the municipalities” (Klein 2004: 307). For those who met the new criteria for targeted assistance, several programs of poverty alleviation existed, including “family subsidies and nutritional intervention aimed at pregnant women, mothers, infants, and children,” and “a program of assistance pensions that benefited the elderly who qualified as poor and had not been able to obtain regular social security benefits” (Etchemendy 2011: 227). Also of extreme importance, given the chronically high rate of unemployment during the dictatorship, were two emergency employment schemes: the Minimum Employment Program (PEM) and the Occupational Program for Heads of Household (POJH).<sup>85</sup> These programs provided unemployed workers with a small amount of money in exchange for

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<sup>85</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 224); Graham (1994: 32-41); Loveman (2001: 270); Klein (2004: 307-308); Huneeus (2007: 257-258, 272, 365-366); and Etchemendy (2011: 228-230).

their labor on public works projects.<sup>86</sup> By May 1983, more than half a million people were enrolled in these two programs, or around 15 percent of the entire labor force.<sup>87</sup> These programs did not offer lavish benefits to recipients; nevertheless, they “did provide lifelines under increasingly harsh economic and social conditions” (Klein 2004: 308). The military regime could claim some important social policy achievements, particularly in the areas of sanitation and infant mortality.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, in its effort to prioritize assistance for those the regime considered truly needy, such as pregnant women, children and the indigent, coverage was in some cases actually extended, for the first time, to people that “had been excluded from the previous system despite its universal pretensions” (Taylor 2006: 84). In Etchemendy’s (2011: 227) words: “These programs often reached vulnerable sectors that had been relatively abandoned by traditional welfare policies, and even scholars opposed to the dictatorship acknowledged that they were in certain cases effective.”

The fact that mayors came to play such a key role in the administration of social policy during the dictatorship provided ideal conditions for the construction of clientelistic network, for two reasons. First, while in theory they were only bureaucrats following orders from the national government, in practice they enjoyed considerable autonomy in the implementation of policy. As Graham (1994: 47) puts it: “Within the municipalities, the mayors had ultimate authority: they were ‘mini-Pinochets’ who had complete control over the allocation of employment program resources. Indeed, the implementation of the programs varied with the personal goals or traits of the mayor.” This gave them latitude in

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<sup>86</sup> According to Etchemendy (2011: 229), “[t]he income provided by PEM...was negligible and could only serve for the most elementary needs of survival. It was about 33% of the minimum wage between 1978 and 1982.”

<sup>87</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 224); Huneus (2007: 365); and Klein (2004: 307).

<sup>88</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 231); Oxhorn (1995: 73-74); and Taylor (2006: 83).



distributing social benefits, which, as will be seen in the discussion of territorial organization, they appear to have used to channel disproportionate amounts of aid to UDI supporters. Second, while the military authorities insisted that social policy was applied on the basis of purely “technical” criteria, in reality politics often entered into allocation decisions. In 1983-1984, for example, thousands of beneficiaries were removed from the PEM and POJH, apparently as punishment for their participation in anti-regime protests.<sup>89</sup> In short, a combination of factors—poverty, autonomy and politics—provided mayors with an ideal set of necessary for constructing networks of supporters in their municipalities.

Was this really clientelism? This is the term typically used in the literature to explain how mayors appointed during the dictatorship ended up being elected UDI deputies after democratization.<sup>90</sup> It would appear to meet the broad definition of clientelism, that is, linkages created and maintained through “direct, personal, and typically material side payments” (Kitschelt 2000: 849). As discussed above, there is also some evidence of benefits being withheld on political grounds, such as participation in anti-regime protests. The evidence for this kind of direct *quid pro quo* is relatively limited, however. While it appears to have happened at least sometimes, there is little to suggest systematic monitoring. It seems more likely that the popular support that mayors built up in their municipalities was the result of a confluence of factors. To be sure, one key factor was clientelism, broadly understood, in the form of anti-poverty subsidies, enrollment in employment programs or

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<sup>89</sup> As Huneus (2007: 365) explains: “People in the PEM and the POJH began to join the protests [in 1983]... The military officers in the regime leapt into action, applying drastic measures to stop the protests: they cut funding for their job creation programs to punish workers for mobilizing against the government... The most drastic cuts affected PEM workers in the Metropolitan Region, where protests were loudest, with jobs falling from 67,160 in January 1984 to 8,198 in February.” See also Huneus (2007: 258).

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Hipsher (1996); Pollack (1999: 191-192); Morales and Bugueño (2001: 234-235); Huneus (2000: 498; 2007: 207, 258, 274); Klein (2004, 2009); and Luna (2010).

assistance in obtaining a new house. But the popularity of many mayors seems also to have stemmed from charisma, competence and simple name recognition. By all accounts, some of the mayors who would eventually become UDI deputies, such as Carlos Bombal in the municipality of Santiago and Iván Moreira in La Cisterna, were talented politicians with a deft popular touch.<sup>91</sup> Many of these mayors were also educated, hard-working professionals who fulfilled their administrative responsibilities competently.<sup>92</sup> Finally, mayors benefited from the simple fact that they became well-known figures in their municipalities. In Chile's "binomial" electoral system, which is an unusual form of open-list proportional representation, voters cast ballots for an individual candidate rather than a party list.<sup>93</sup> Under such circumstances, the simple possession of name recognition—something virtually guaranteed after being mayor for several years—is an important electoral asset.

The popular followings that many mayors built up during the dictatorship benefited both the UDI and RN. According to Huneeus (2007: 43), approximately one-third of RN deputies between 1989 and 2001 had been mayors during the military regime, suggesting that it also benefited from this form of authoritarian inheritance. In the case of the UDI, the effect was even stronger: almost one-half of its deputies between 1989 and 2001 had been mayors (Huneeus 2007: 443). In the "founding election" of 1989, the effect was particularly noteworthy: 10 of the 14 UDI deputies elected had been mayors during the military regime,<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> See, for example, Valdivia's (2008c: 199-210) discussion of Carlos Bombal.

<sup>92</sup> In their discussion of the UDI's success, for example, Valenzuela and Dammert (2006: 71) emphasize this factor rather than clientelism: "The UDI's initial success resulted from the imagination and hard work of its youthful leaders. They focused on some of Chile's poorest communities, garnering support by serving ably in local offices while using populist rhetoric."

<sup>93</sup> On the mechanics and effects of the binomial system, see Siavelis (1997).

<sup>94</sup> These were Francisco Bartolucci, Carlos Bombal, Sergio Correa de la Cerda, Pedro Guzmán, Juan Masferrer, Patricio Melero, Jaime Orpis, Víctor Pérez, Carlos Recondo and Jorge Ulloa. For a complete list of the

earning the UDI the nickname the “party of the mayors” (Constable and Valenzuela 1991: 289). There are two likely reasons why the “mayor factor” benefited the UDI disproportionately. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, the *gremialistas* played an outsized role in municipal government during the military regime, and it is likely that the UDI was simply better represented among mayors than RN. One indicator of this is that, in June 1991, more than a year after the transition to democracy at the national level (but before elections had been held at the municipal level), it was revealed that a whopping 150 of the country’s mayors were UDI members who had been appointed before the end of military rule.<sup>95</sup> This meant that “[t]he majority of the mayors appointed by Pinochet who were still in office under [President Patricio] Aylwin were UDI members” (Graham 1994: 48). Second, because the *gremialistas* had colonized other parts of the administrative apparatus crucial for the design and implementation of social policy, such as ODEPLAN and the housing ministry, *gremialista* mayors were well-positioned to provide benefits to their constituents. This can be seen, for example, in their relationship with Miguel Ángel Poduje, who served as housing minister from 1984 to 1988: “Poduje had been a Gremialista from the start, at Catholic University’s law school. With great determination he began to ‘eradicate’ the *campamentos* (shantytowns) in Santiago, through a massive plan for building low-income housing, developed in close cooperation with the municipal governments... This allowed the

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municipalities where they had been mayors and the periods during which they held these positions, see Pinto (2006: 64). It should be noted that three of these 14 deputies were technically “independents” when they ran for Congress in 1989: Carlos Bombal, Víctor Pérez and Juan Masferrer. However, these nominally independent candidates were widely known to be associated with the UDI. For example, the 1989 campaign of one of these candidates, though he was technically not a member of the party, was a *de facto* UDI campaign. As he explains: “I campaigned with the UDI brand, with the leaders of the UDI—everything. That is, [my] campaign [was] exactly the same as that of the other [UDI] deputies elected.” He formally joined the UDI “three days after the election” (author’s interview with national UDI leader, 12 December 2011).

<sup>95</sup> See “Enrostraron a la UDI Militancia de 150 Alcaldes Designados,” *El Mercurio*, 27 June 1991.

Gremialistas to win important support in the *poblaciones*, which formed part of the long-term strategy of building a major right-wing party” (Huneus 2007: 203).<sup>96</sup>

The UDI mayors-cum-deputies are remarkably forthright about the role of their time in municipal government in getting elected to Congress, admitting that it played a decisive role.<sup>97</sup> Because congressional districts often contained multiple municipalities, they were even able to carry out rough experiments by comparing votes received in the municipalities where they had been mayors versus votes received in other municipalities within the larger electoral district. One UDI deputy elected in 1989, for example, describes how he lost to his RN running mate in most of the municipalities contained in the district, but nevertheless won the election because of the votes he received in the municipality where he had been mayor: “He beat me [in the other municipalities]—not by much, but he beat me. But in [my municipality], I got five times as many votes as him. So, you can see that my time as mayor was decisive: because he could never enter [my municipality], because I had strong ties there due to my four years as mayor.”<sup>98</sup> Another UDI deputy elected in 1989 tells a similar story about how the municipality where he had been mayor during the military regime was crucial for beating his RN running mate, despite relative parity between them in the rest of the district: “In general, there was no big difference [in votes between us]. In all of the municipalities, it was pretty balanced—except for [my municipality], where all the votes went

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<sup>96</sup> Elsewhere, Huneus (2007: 207) writes: “Housing was a very important portfolio for the Gremialistas’ organizing efforts in the *poblaciones*, given the minister’s enormous capacity for clientelism through its ‘housing solution’ programs.” Also important in this respect was the “direct channel of communication between the Gremialistas in local government and in ODEPLAN” (Huneus 2007: 257).

<sup>97</sup> In the words of one such figure: “[I]t’s clear that if I had not been mayor, I would not have been a candidate for deputy. Being mayor was what allowed me to insert myself politically. Those four years [as mayor] allowed me to become known in Pudahuel” (author’s interview with national UDI leader, 28 October 2011).

<sup>98</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 28 October 2011.

to me. To our side. To the UDI. My running mate didn't receive any votes in [my municipality]. This broke the equilibrium and allowed me to be elected. Thus, [my municipality], at that moment, was really decisive.”<sup>99</sup>

In addition to the direct impact of “the mayor factor”—that is, the election of several former mayors to the Chamber of Deputies—the UDI also received an indirect electoral boost from mayors, in two ways. First, there were knock-on effects, whereby UDI candidates in 1989 who had not themselves been mayors benefited from the endorsement of those who had. Patricio Melero, for example, asserts that his time as mayor of Pudahuel was decisive not only for his own election to the Chamber of Deputies in 1989, but also that of Jaime Guzmán to the Senate in a district of Santiago that included Pudahuel. Melero explains this while recalling a dispute between him and Guzmán, after Melero declined Guzmán's request for him to assume a leadership position within the UDI and instead accepted a mayoral appointment: “I became mayor against the wishes of Jaime [Guzmán], who got angry with me and did not speak to me for a year. But I got him back afterwards when I was elected deputy. I said: ‘See, Jaime? Thanks to the fact I was mayor, today I am a deputy and you are a senator.’”<sup>100</sup> Similarly, one of the four UDI deputies elected in 1989 who had not been a mayor explains how his association with Carlos Bombal, the popular former mayor of Santiago, gave him a boost. During the election, the two men took photos together and made joint appearances at campaign events in the congressional district that overlapped with the municipality of Santiago, which helped the candidate to get his name

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<sup>99</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 22 November 2011.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Pinto (2006: 64).

out: “Obviously, my association with Carlos [Bombal] was [helpful]. Carlos was a well-known person. Nobody knew me. So, he was a good letter of introduction, let’s say.”<sup>101</sup>

Second, many UDI mayors remained in their positions even after the transition to democracy. Despite efforts by President Patricio Aylwin (1990-1994) to reform the constitution in order to allow for municipal elections, these were not held until 1992.<sup>102</sup> This meant that “[f]or more than two years after the change of power at the national level...the overwhelming majority of mayors designated by the outgoing military could stay in power and continue their work, strengthening the links with the population in their municipalities” (Klein 2004: 321-322). In June 1991, more than a year after the transition to democracy at the national level, 150 of the country’s mayors were UDI members who had been appointed before the end of military rule.<sup>103</sup> This meant that “[t]he majority of the mayors appointed by Pinochet who were still in office under Aylwin were UDI members” (Graham 1994: 48). The continued presence of unelected UDI mayors, many of whom “controlled very large budgets” (Pollack 1997: 117), may have helped the party to continue its expansion. In addition, in the parliamentary election of 1993, one of these UDI mayors, Iván Moreira, who had been appointed in August 1989, was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, and another, Claudio Alvarado, who had been a mayor earlier in the 1980s, was also elected.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>102</sup> See Graham (1994: 46), Bland (2004), Eaton (2004) and Klein (2004: 321-322).

<sup>103</sup> See “Enrostraron a la UDI Militancia de 150 Alcaldes Designados,” *El Mercurio*, 27 June 1991. For a profile of one such figure, Iván Moreira, who was appointed mayor shortly before the transition to democracy and later elected to the Chamber of Deputies, see “Alcalde de La Cisterna: Con la polémica en ristre,” *Ercilla*, 3 April 1991.

<sup>104</sup> See “Reseña Biográfica Parlamentaria: Iván Moreira Barros”: [http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas\\_parlamentarias/wiki/Iv%C3%A1n\\_Moreira\\_Barros](http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas_parlamentarias/wiki/Iv%C3%A1n_Moreira_Barros). Accessed on 23 June 2014. See also “Reseña Biográfica Parlamentaria: Claudio Alvarado Andrade”: [http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas\\_parlamentarias/wiki/Claudio\\_Alvarado\\_Andrade](http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas_parlamentarias/wiki/Claudio_Alvarado_Andrade). Accessed on 23 June 2014.

The inheritance of clientelistic networks built up by appointed mayors during the dictatorship has continued to help the UDI in several ways. First, clientelistic networks allowed the UDI to perform strongly in the 1989 “founding elections,” which in turn allowed it to lay the foundations for future growth.<sup>105</sup> Performing well in this first election was crucial for demonstrating the electoral clout of the UDI to donors and voters who, while perhaps sympathetic to the new party for historical and programmatic reasons, might have hesitated to support it for fear that it was a bad investment.<sup>106</sup> In short, the 1989 elections constituted a kind of “litmus test” for the UDI, and “the party passed it with unexpected bravura” (Klein 2004: 319). Second, given the very high rates of incumbent reelection in Chile,<sup>107</sup> the fact that the UDI could draw on inherited clientelistic networks to perform strongly in the 1989 elections had longer-term consequences, since many UDI deputies elected in that year were reelected in subsequent elections. Third, some former mayors who became UDI deputies insist that memories from their previous life in municipal government continue to inform how some voters cast their ballots. In the words of one former mayor elected to Congress: “Being a mayor is what allowed me my political insertion... It was the platform that allowed me—right up until the present—electoral

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<sup>105</sup> For a discussion of the importance of “founding elections,” see O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 57-64) and Hale (2006: 17-18).

<sup>106</sup> This is very similar to what Hale (2006: 17) calls “critical political mass”: “Critical political mass is defined as the possession of sufficient strength that the party’s nominee, regardless of who the nominee is and solely by virtue of this nomination, always acquires ‘focal’ status as one of the candidates believed by both voters and important political elites to have a good chance to win a seat in a given election. Once a party achieves critical political mass, it starts to attract elite and mass support from those who do not want to waste their votes or resources on losers and who consider the party their best *realistic* chance to have their interests represented.” Founding elections, Hale (2006: 18) argues, are essential for building critical political mass: “The victories of the winners in a country’s first multiparty elections can produce a snowballing effect, in which capital coalesces around those parties with proven track records of victory and flees from those suffering initial defeats.”

<sup>107</sup> See Navia (2000).

support. People [would say] even in my last campaign [in 2010]: ‘Why do you vote for [him]?’ ‘Because he was a good mayor. Because he paved my street. Because he gave me a house.’”<sup>108</sup>

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the UDI has managed to sustain these clientelistic networks, despite losing access to the ready state patronage that it had during the dictatorship. As Posner (2004, 2008) and Luna (2010, 2014) have documented, the party has done so through private resources donated by supporters in the business community. Specifically, the UDI has translated business donations into material gifts, such as payment of household utility bills or the distribution of television sets, boxes of food, pairs of glasses, equipment for local sports clubs, prizes for bingo games, and so on.<sup>109</sup> In addition, the UDI has provided medical assistance, legal services and tips for how best to make use of the social programs introduced during the military regime, particularly with respect to housing.<sup>110</sup> Such gifts and services have been essential for maintaining the clientelistic networks constructed during the military regime, and in so doing to win what the UDI calls the “soft vote,” or the votes of poor people who lack strong ideological convictions or feelings of partisanship.<sup>111</sup> Thus, while the percentage of UDI deputies who had been mayors during the military regime inevitably declined in the years after democratization,<sup>112</sup> the UDI was still

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<sup>108</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 28 October 2011.

<sup>109</sup> See Luna (2010: 345-346) and Posner (2004: 72-74).

<sup>110</sup> See “UDI en las Poblaciones: ¿La Derecha Se Hace Popular?” *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1990. See also Pinto (2006: 164).

<sup>111</sup> See Luna (2010: 344-346).

<sup>112</sup> See Huneeus (2001a: 38; 2007: 443) and Joignant and Navia (2003: 155).



able to maintain and reap electoral dividends from its clientelistic networks. This form of authoritarian inheritance played—and continues to play—a crucial role in the UDI's success.

### *Territorial Organization*

The third resource that the UDI inherited from the authoritarian regime was a robust territorial organization. As discussed in Chapter 3, one of the UDI's defining characteristics was its strong presence in the country's slums or *poblaciones*. The party's penetration of these areas began in the 1980s, when it created an entity called the *Departamento Poblacional* (Slum Department), whose aim was to win over the hearts and minds of poor Chileans and, as one party slogan put it, "to fight the communists, inch by inch, in every *población* in the country."<sup>113</sup> By the time of the transition to democracy, the UDI had an organizational presence in nearly every *población* in the greater metropolitan area of Santiago, with hundreds of party cells and thousands of party activists.<sup>114</sup> This organizational presence in the country's *poblaciones* has benefited the UDI in a number of ways. First, it has given some credibility to the UDI's claims of being a "poor people's party." While parties of the left and center largely abandoned organizing efforts in the *poblaciones*,<sup>115</sup> the UDI remained true to one of its earliest stated goals: to maintain a continuous presence in poor neighborhoods or, as the party puts it, simply "to be there."<sup>116</sup> Second, it has occasionally allowed the UDI to

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<sup>113</sup> For detailed accounts of the UDI's penetration of the *poblaciones*, see Soto (2001) and Pinto (2006).

<sup>114</sup> See Pinto (2006: 152, 156-157) and Soto (2001: 15). See also "UDI en las Poblaciones: ¿La Derecha Se Hace Popular?," *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1990.

<sup>115</sup> By the early 2000s, for example, the Socialist Party "ha[d] no formal organization devoted to popular sector political education or organizing and ha[d] essentially abandoned its tradition of grassroots organizing" (Posner 2004: 72). See also Klein (2004: 322).

<sup>116</sup> See Pinto (2006: 130-131).

embarrass its center-left opponents in government, as when it organized an illegal land seizure by hundreds of poor families, reportedly with the aim of provoking a violent confrontation with the police and in order to highlight the government's inability to deal effectively with the issue of housing.<sup>117</sup> Finally, the UDI's strong territorial organization has been important for the ongoing deliverance of clientelistic gifts and services.<sup>118</sup>

As discussed in Chapter 3, the UDI's penetration of the *poblaciones* had a voluntaristic component: based on their reading of the shortcomings of traditional conservative parties in Chile, UDI leaders calculated that the party could only succeed if it won support in poor areas, and then doggedly pursued this goal. Yet, while the novelty of its strategy and the tenacity of its pursuit surely mattered, the UDI's organization-building success was not the product of voluntarism alone. Instead, the party was able to draw on a number of crucial resources from the authoritarian regime, without which it is unlikely that it would have advanced in the *poblaciones* as much as it did. As Pinto (2006: 215), in a sympathetic history of the *Departamento Poblacional*, writes: "But the success that the popular UDI had in numerous *poblacional* sectors was not due only to idealism and the training of leaders; this entity could also count on material resources useful to it in the deployment of its solidarity work and social assistance, which favored the development of the *Departamento Poblacional*."

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<sup>117</sup> As Oxhorn (1995: 268) recounts: "A case in point is a series of three illegal land seizures organized by the UDI in August 1990. Approximately 800 families participated after having been assured by UDI militants that sympathetic local authorities would take advantage of the situation to find a solution to their housing situation. Most of the participants did not belong to any political party and few had ties to popular organizations (although community leaders and local party militants later became involved in order to help mediate the conflict). The UDI knew that the government would not tolerate such activity and hoped to embarrass it by highlighting its inability to solve the desperate housing situation. The UDI further hoped to undermine the government's human rights position by forcing a violent confrontation with the police. It sent what the police and government condemned as outside 'provocateurs' to one of the land seizures when the participants refused to peacefully vacate the land and were dislodged by the police." See also "UDI Planificó Toma de Terreno en La Cisterna," *El Mercurio*, 11 August 1990.

<sup>118</sup> See Posner (2004, 2008) and Luna (2010, 2014).

Likewise, despite the fact that this work was carried out during the years when *gremialismo* had lost influence and positions in government, the UDI always had the support of public figures that contributed to smoothing the path in the *poblaciones*.” In short, the story of the UDI’s territorial organization is also a story of authoritarian inheritance.

First, the UDI was able to build upon the organizational structure of the National Youth Secretariat (SNJ). As discussed in Chapter 3, the SNJ had been created by the military regime to mobilize the support of young people, and carried out recreational activities and various forms of social service, such as vocational training and classes on nutrition.<sup>119</sup> It was arguably the military regime’s most serious organization-building project, and it “covered the whole country, having a branch in each province and most municipalities” (Huneus 2007: 249). The idea for the SNJ had initially been proposed by Jaime Guzmán, and it was thoroughly dominated by the *gremialistas* from the beginning. The existence of the SNJ—and the prominent role of the *gremialistas* in it—gave the future founders of the UDI an opportunity to forge contacts well beyond the group of university students who had created the *Movimiento Gremial* in the 1960s. In Valdivia’s (2006b: 80) words, the SNJ allowed for “the first construction of a political base for the *gremialistas*, since this entity offered for the first time the opportunity for a right-wing group to establish contact with the popular sectors.” In other words, “the Secretariat was the means utilized by the *gremialistas* to enter the *poblacional* world through the branches that it established in numerous municipalities in the capital, as well as the provinces, especially those with few resources” (Valdivia 2008c: 187). Crucially, the head of the SNJ from 1980 to 1983, Luis Cordero, would become one of the founders of the UDI. In his capacity as head of the SNJ, Cordero “had constructed...a

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<sup>119</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011. See also Huneus (2007: 249).

network of hundreds of people whom he knew and considered friends” (Pinto 2006: 122). When the UDI began to make an effort to organize in the *poblaciones*, party leaders “drew on all the friendships and contacts that they had managed to establish, above all, in the period of Luis Cordero” (Pinto 2006: 122-123).<sup>120</sup> After the UDI was formed, Cordero explained, party leaders would contact people from “that immense organization throughout the country,” and organize into party cells those who responded positively to their overture.<sup>121</sup> In short, the SNJ played an important role in the construction of the UDI’s territorial organization, providing it with a beachhead in areas traditionally hostile to the right, and which it could later draw on when attempting to build its own party organization.

Second, the UDI received assistance from sympathetic mayors. As discussed above and in Chapter 3, during the military regime, the *gremialistas* had a large presence in municipal government. This benefited the UDI by allowing mayors to construct clientelistic networks, which they could draw on after the transition to democracy to get elected to Congress. But *gremialista* mayors benefited the UDI in a second way by providing assistance to party activists who were engaged in organization-building activities in their municipalities. In theory, mayors were supposed to be non-political administrators; in reality, however, they often found ways to advance the work of their party.<sup>122</sup> As one UDI leader and former mayor admitted: “Political non-participation was demanded of us [by the regime], but we broke that rule all the time. Without being explicit, we acted.”<sup>123</sup> One way that mayors could help was by putting organizers from the UDI’s *Departamento Poblacional* in contact with

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<sup>120</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>121</sup> Luis Cordero, quoted in Pinto (2006: 122). Also author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>122</sup> See Pinto (2006: 123, 164).

<sup>123</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 28 October 2011.

sympathetic individuals in their municipalities. As one UDI leader who played a key role in the party's early organizational work recalls: "They [mayors] helped us by passing us people's information. We had mayors in various important cities... These helped us. They made it easier for us. In other municipalities, where we didn't have mayors, it was more complicated."<sup>124</sup> In other cases, mayors took an even more hands-on approach. In discussing the UDI's early history, one UDI deputy and former mayor spontaneously offered the following recollection:<sup>125</sup>

I also think that it was very important that those of us who were mayors...played a political role. And later we [mayors] also contributed to the formation of the UDI, with the contacts that we had managed to put together with our own local leaderships... [We] helped to collect signatures when the Law of Political Parties was approved [in 1987], and it was necessary to register parties. We used our contacts...to collect the signatures needed to register a party... This was a thing that was probably not very [pauses]...authorized. But obviously we did it. We used the contacts that came with having control of the municipalities.

While this assistance from mayors was probably not decisive for the construction of the UDI's territorial organization, it was, as one interviewee put it, "one more factor."<sup>126</sup>

Third, the UDI benefited from its intimate understanding of the military regime's social policies, which it used in order to channel support to UDI activists in the *poblaciones*. As discussed above, during the dictatorship, a number of new means-tested social programs were created to provide assistance to the very poorest members of society. Because the *gremialistas* had thoroughly penetrated ODEPLAN, where most of the regime's economic and social policies were developed, they had a deep understanding of how these policies worked. They knew which programs existed, the criteria for eligibility and how to apply for

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<sup>124</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

<sup>125</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 22 November 2011.

<sup>126</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 10 November 2011.

benefits. In its organizational drive in the *poblaciones*, the UDI made use of this knowledge.

As Pinto (2006: 164), in a sympathetic history of the *Departamento Poblacional*, explains:

Since the majority of *pobladores* did not know about how to take advantage of the social and labor policies of the government, the national coordinators [of the UDI] decided to channel in this way their support to the *pobladores*, helping them to connect to the social network... [T]hey provided them, for example, information to facilitate the path to receiving certain municipal benefits, so that they knew how to receive subsidies, welfare assistance, family grants and, in general, all the social policies that the military government had created. All of this was carried out through training sessions and lectures by professionals.

One expression of this phenomenon was the UDI's creation of what it called "committees of future property owners," in which they taught people how to apply for low-income housing (Pinto 2006: 164). As one UDI leader explained in 1986: "They [*pobladores*] don't understand the paperwork to acquire a house with [only a small amount] of previous savings."<sup>127</sup> The UDI did understand the paperwork, and it used this knowledge to its benefit. Moreover, since municipal governments were responsible for the implementation of many social programs, it is likely that UDI supporters received special treatment from *gremialista* mayors. As *El Mercurio*, Chile's foremost conservative newspaper, reported: "[T]he municipalities with UDI mayors favored *poblacional* leaders from the party."<sup>128</sup>

Finally, even when the UDI did not receive direct help from the military regime, it benefited from the simple tolerance of the authorities. Until 1987, political parties were legally banned in Chile, and opposition parties of the left and center suffered violent persecution. The UDI did not face the same difficulties. Even when it was openly critical of the regime's policies—which, as discussed in Chapter 3, it was at various points in the 1980s—the authorities tolerated it. It could even publish critiques in the press, as one UDI

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<sup>127</sup> Quoted in Pinto (2006: 164).

<sup>128</sup> See "UDI en las Poblaciones: ¿La Derecha Se Hace Popular?," *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1990.

founder explained, “with the knowledge that, because we were supporters of the government, they were not going to respond harshly.”<sup>129</sup> This was because, as another UDI founder explained, “for people who were, in one way or another, inside the government, there was not the same prohibition that there might have been for others.”<sup>130</sup> This toleration by the regime extended to the UDI’s organization-building activities, which, as reflected by the many articles in the press on the topic,<sup>131</sup> were carried out in the full light of day. Thus, while opposition parties that had traditionally been active in the *poblaciones* were driven underground or, at the very least, forced to be discreet, the UDI could act without fear of reprisal. This gave the party a distinct advantage. As Valdivia (2006b: 80) explains, while “the left, and also to some degree the Christian Democrats...saw their possibilities of maintaining links to the popular sectors restricted as a result of repression...the *gremialistas* took advantage of the context created by the dictatorship to replace the historical presence of the left...” In short, much of the UDI’s progress in organization-building was the product of a “necessary context: a dictatorship that assured the withdrawal of its enemies” (Valdivia 2008c: 186). The upshot is that the UDI’s organizational activities were aided—indirectly but still crucially—by the military regime’s tolerance towards it. While the authorities cracked down on Communists, Socialists and Christian Democrats, they turned the blind eye on the UDI while it set about constructing its territorial organization.

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<sup>129</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 25 October 2011.

<sup>130</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 10 November 2011.

<sup>131</sup> See, for example, “Se formó comité UDI en población J.M. Caro,” *Las Últimas Noticias*, 14 January 1984; “Unión Demócrata Independiente (UDI): Apoyan a Poblador Que Repelió Secuestro de Hijo,” *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1985; “Organiza la UDI: Antiprotestas callejeras realizan en poblaciones,” *La Tercera*, 25 October 1985; “Población Juan Antonio Ríos: Masivo Homenaje UDI a Víctimas del Terrorismo,” *El Mercurio*, 17 November 1985; and “¿Por Qué un Poblador Dirigente de la UDI?,” *El Mercurio*, 6 April 1986.

To summarize, by the time of the transition to democracy, the UDI had a strong territorial organization, particularly in the country's *poblaciones*, which had traditionally been beyond the reach of Chile's conservative parties. While part of the UDI's success at organization-building was due to voluntaristic factors, this was facilitated by various forms of assistance from the military regime, including contacts made through the National Youth Secretariat, the cooperation of sympathetic mayors, an understanding of the military regime's social policies and tolerance for the UDI's partisan activities by the military authorities. This strong territorial organization contributed to the UDI's success by bolstering its image as a "poor people's party" and allowing it to channel clientelistic handouts toward poor voters after democratization. These clientelistic handouts, in turn, were made possible thanks to the UDI's close connections to the private sector, which is discussed below.

#### *Business Connections*

The fourth resource that the UDI inherited from the military regime was a close relationship with business. As discussed early in the chapter, business had been one of the most stalwart supporters of the dictatorship, and had been extremely wary about the prospect of democratization.<sup>132</sup> Indeed, "[o]rganized business support for continued authoritarianism in Chile was highly public and nearly unanimous" (Silva 1998: 235), and in the 1988 plebiscite, "business support for Pinochet...was nearly universal" (Barrett 2000: 8). After Pinochet's loss, however, business was forced to adapt to the new reality of a democratic Chile. One way that it did this was by supporting likeminded political parties.

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<sup>132</sup> See Shirley Christian, "Chile's Elite Seeks 'Soft Landing,'" *The New York Times*, 9 August 1987.



Initially, RN seems to have been the preferred party of business.<sup>133</sup> This soon changed, however, as much of the business community shifted its support to the UDI. Today, most observers agree that the UDI has become the preferred party of Chilean business and that, consequently, it is better financed than RN or any other party.<sup>134</sup>

What explains business' support for the UDI? The party seems to have had at least some connections to business from its founding in 1983, though probably fairly limited. One of the members of the UDI's first steering committee, for example, was Guillermo Elton, who had previously been the president of the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>135</sup> In addition, the UDI maintained some connections to businesspeople forged during the earlier struggle against Allende.<sup>136</sup> Whatever the initial support of business, it was limited in comparison to what it would later become. UDI leaders constantly emphasize that, in the early years, it was hard to get the support of businesspeople, and they claim that the party ran on a shoestring budget.<sup>137</sup> Part of this was due to the fact that most of its leaders were in their twenties or early thirties, and thus were dismissed as mere "kids."<sup>138</sup> There was also a generational divide between UDI leaders and many businesspeople over economics. Given the UDI's close links to the Chicago Boys, older businessmen reportedly "hated" the party, dismissing its leaders as "theoretical economists" with no understanding of how businesses really

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<sup>133</sup> According to Barozet and Aubry (2005: 172), "[a]t the beginning of the 1990s, it is very probable that RN benefited from superior finances than the UDI, insofar as it was the political referent of the entire sector and had more representatives."

<sup>134</sup> See Pollack (1999: 132); Barrett (2000: 10-13, 21-24); Huneeus (2001b: 330); Silva (2002: 343); Barozet and Aubry (2005: 172-173); Angell (2007: 154); Fairfield (2010: 51); and Luna (2010).

<sup>135</sup> See " 'Unión Demócrata Independiente': Constituida nueva entidad política," *La Nación*, 25 September 1983.

<sup>136</sup> Author's interview with UDI founder, 17 May 2012.

<sup>137</sup> See Pinto (2006: 151).

<sup>138</sup> Author's interview with UDI founder, 17 May 2012.

operated.<sup>139</sup> The fact that much of the pre-1973 business community in Chile was not particularly committed to free-market principles, and that many firms suffered with the shift to neoliberalism, makes such claims seem plausible.<sup>140</sup>

The UDI's relationship to business eventually underwent a dramatic improvement, as the result of several factors. First, the business community as a whole became much more committed to neoliberalism, bringing it closer to the UDI in terms of ideology. As the older generation of businesspeople died off—either literally, or in terms of bankruptcy—more statist and protectionist viewpoints lost influence.<sup>141</sup> According to one national UDI leader, the new generation of businesspeople that took their place was far more supportive of the UDI: “Over the years, a new type of businessperson was born: the young businessperson, competitive, [who uses] the internet—that type of businessperson really supports us. But that businessperson was never protected. [T]he older generation of businesspeople...hated us.”<sup>142</sup> Second, many of these free-market-oriented businessmen had themselves held posts in the dictatorship. As Schamis (1999: 249-250) explains: “[K]ey policymakers of the

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<sup>139</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, March 8, 2012.

<sup>140</sup> By all accounts, much of the business community was shocked by the regime's adoption of free-market economic policies, and by the lack of consultation with business associations. As Campero (1995: 132) explains: “After 1975, the implementation of the neo-liberal economic model exacerbated the conflicts that had begun in 1973. Not only was the power of the *gremios* [business associations] threatened, but the very economic survival of small and medium-sized enterprises was also at stake because of the regime's general economic policy as well as its new orientation toward international markets. The neo-liberal economic policies and the lack of support for the *gremios* presented the small and medium-sized entrepreneurs with two difficult trials. They had assumed that the military government would apply a completely different political and economic scheme. Politically, the entrepreneurs had hoped that their *gremios* would be recognized and acquire institutionalized influence over social and political matters. Economically, they had hoped for state protection and development policies that would privilege and support them. When it became apparent that neither expectation would be fulfilled, these entrepreneurs reacted with frustration and shock. They considered themselves the true ‘social force’ that made military intervention possible, and they expected the new government to be ‘their’ government.”

<sup>141</sup> See Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 213).

<sup>142</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

Pinochet government served on the boards and in the executive offices of large economic conglomerates before and after holding cabinet and central bank positions, leading to collusion between economic power and political power... With Chile's return to democracy in 1990...the participation of policymakers of the military government on the boards of the largest firms in the country expanded, which suggests that the alliances forged during the long economic reform experiment were built to last.” This history of business-state collusion meant that in their capacity as public functionaries, many future business leaders established connections with members of the UDI.<sup>143</sup> The result was that the “UDI and the dominant business groups that emerged after economic restructuring in the 1980s shared close informal ties based on common origins in the dictatorship” (Fairfield 2010: 51-52).

The combination of generational change, common origins in the dictatorship and the UDI's strong association with the *Pinochetista* brand all meant that by the time of the transition to democracy, the UDI had the sympathy of much of the Chilean business community. It was not until later, however, that the UDI actually displaced RN as business' party of choice, as a result of two factors. First, the UDI demonstrated that it was a serious electoral contender. Nobody wants to place money on a losing bet, and it was not initially clear that the UDI was a winner.<sup>144</sup> While RN could be expected to perform well, given that it was partially a continuation of the old National Party (PN), the UDI's electoral prospects were unknown. These doubts were laid to rest following the UDI's strong performance in the 1989 election and subsequent elections. Business took notice, and the money began to

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<sup>143</sup> See also Pollack (1999: 132) and Fernández (2004: 202-203).

<sup>144</sup> Durruty (1999: 116) describes the UDI during its first years in democracy as “a total question mark.”

flow accordingly.<sup>145</sup> Second, the UDI has been far more loyal to the brand and programmatic legacy of the military regime than RN. While both the UDI and RN are authoritarian successor parties, RN's support for the military regime has always been somewhat circumspect, and it has shown a greater willingness to negotiate with the center-left *Concertación* than the UDI.<sup>146</sup> From the point of view of business, this caused RN to suffer what Lupu (2013, forthcoming) calls "brand dilution." Indeed, parts of RN have "seemed at times nearer the *Concertación* than the bulk of the right" (Angell 2007: 77).<sup>147</sup> This tendency to waffle on the dictatorship and to negotiate with political opponents has "earned RN the growing enmity of the military, the UDI, and hardline big business leaders" (Barrett 2000: 10). While RN continued to enjoy the support of some parts of the business community, "large-scale business turned to hard line UDI for political representation instead of the more compromise-ready Renovación Nacional" (Silva 2002: 343). The upshot is that the UDI evolved into the preferred party of Chilean business. This status was the product of authoritarian inheritance: network ties between UDI and business leaders stemming from a shared past in the military regime; the brand of *Pinochetismo*, which appealed to a business community deeply loyal to the military regime; and a proven ability to win votes, which was the product of other forms of authoritarian inheritance, such as clientelistic networks.

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<sup>145</sup> See Fernandois (2000: 356) and Morales and Buguño (2001: 234-235).

<sup>146</sup> For example, RN played a crucial role in negotiating reforms to the 1980 constitution after Pinochet's loss in the 1988 plebiscite, and it negotiated a tax increase with the governing *Concertación* in 1990. For descriptions of these episodes, see Constable and Valenzuela (1991: 312-313) and Boylan (1996), respectively.

<sup>147</sup> The belief that RN has become too similar to the *Concertación* has been criticized by some of the party's more ideologically conservative leaders. See, for example, "Carlos Larraín: 'Hay personas que quisieran transformar a RN en un partido de izquierda,'" *Emol.com*, 21 June 2014. <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2014/06/21/666366/carlos-larrain-hay-personas-que-quisieran-transformar-a-rn-en-un-partido-de-izquierda.html>. Accessed on 23 June 2014.

The UDI-business relationship has been mutually beneficial. From the point of view of business, the UDI has faithfully defended its interests. As Luna (2010: 339) explains, data on roll-call voting indicates that the UDI was “the most systematic defender of market-oriented reforms introduced under the dictatorship... [T]he UDI seems to have fulfilled its promise to protect business elites, safeguarding the legacy of the authoritarian regime.”<sup>148</sup> From the point of view of the UDI, its uncompromisingly pro-business stance has won it the strong financial backing of the private sector. Because campaign finance laws in Chile are lax,<sup>149</sup> it is difficult to determine with accuracy the UDI’s finances in comparison to other parties. However, existing evidence—both anecdotal and empirical—suggests that the UDI has a significant advantage. For example, according to self-reported data from the 2005 Chamber of Deputies elections, the UDI spent an average of \$90,000 per race, which was \$20,000 more than the second biggest spender (Party for Democracy, PPD) and \$30,000 more than RN (Luna 2010: 340). Similarly, an outside report on expenditures in Chile’s 2004 municipal elections found that the UDI outspent the second biggest spender, RN, by more than 100 percent (Luna 2010: 341). More anecdotally, there is a consensus among

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<sup>148</sup> Although RN is clearly also right-of-center on economic policy, “the UDI opposed, much more systematically than did RN, different legislative packages that could hurt business interests or potentially redistribute resources to lower social strata, through policies such as minimum wage increases, tighter market and labour regulation, state education subsidies, and tax and pension system reforms” (Luna 2010: 339). As a result, the UDI is considered to be a more attractive option for many businessmen than RN. As one high-ranking RN leader frankly admits, he would not give money to his own party if he were a businessman: “I am not making a value judgment, but I think that if I were a businessman, if I were the general manager of... a gigantic business, and I had to give money, I wouldn’t give it to *Renovación Nacional*. Because here in *Renovación Nacional*, the posture [of] being in favor of higher corporate taxes...[and] of wanting to increase the minimum wage—these are signals that go against my interests as a company.” This is in contrast to the UDI, which “maintains the pure economic doctrine and opposes tax increases [and] a higher minimum wage. This greatly pleases big business, which is happy to support [UDI candidates] because they are the ones who ultimately defend the interests of the system” (author’s interview with national RN leader, 9 August 2012).

<sup>149</sup> In an article originally published in 2000, Angell (2007: 93) writes: “There is no state funding of parties in Chile, nor are there any limits on campaign expenditures... There is no public scrutiny of such funding, and no effective limit on the expenditure of the parties.” Campaigning finance legislation only began to be implemented in 2004, and even then allowed for considerably opacity (Luna 2010: 340).

social scientists that the UDI receives considerably more financing than other parties, particularly from big business.<sup>150</sup> The upshot is that the UDI's close connection to business has given the party extraordinary access to finances. In Luna (2010: 342) words: "In short, the UDI has developed a financial edge over its competitors by extracting financial resources from its core constituency... The UDI's unique ability to secure and administer financial resources through its private sector links has given the party a major competitive advantage."

The UDI's close connections to business have not only allowed it to spend more on elections, but also to sustain clientelistic networks inherited from the authoritarian regime. As discussed previously, the UDI benefited from the fact that many of its leaders had been mayors during the dictatorship. After the transition to democracy, the party lost access to state patronage, but it was able to sustain its clientelistic networks thanks to private resources it could access as a result of its close relationship to business.<sup>151</sup> As Luna (2010: 343) explains: "[B]etter access to private financing allowed the UDI to develop and 'feed' an increasingly encompassing social network that operated as a political machine to attract non-core constituents." To be sure, the UDI's use of clientelism was hardly unique; as Valenzuela (1977) famously documented, clientelism had long been a central feature of Chilean politics, especially at the local level.<sup>152</sup> What distinguished the UDI from other parties was simply that it did clientelism better. As one Christian Democratic deputy complained, it was hard for him to compete with his UDI rival because the latter gave away

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<sup>150</sup> See Pollack (1999: 132); Barrett (2000: 10-13, 21-24); Huneeus (2001b: 330); Silva (2002: 343); Barozet and Aubry (2005: 172-173); Angell (2007: 154); Fairfield (2010: 51); and Luna (2010).

<sup>151</sup> See Posner (2004, 2008) and Luna (2010, 2014).

<sup>152</sup> See also Oxhorn (1995: 58).

“better stuff,” which was only possible because of business donations.<sup>153</sup> In short, as Posner (2004: 74) puts it: “These examples suggest not that the UDI is alone in its use of traditional patronage strategies but that the party has superior access to private sector resources, which enable it to employ such strategies with greater effect.” To summarize, the UDI’s inheritance of business support from the military regime has played a crucial role in the party’s success, allowing it to outspend its competitors and maintain its clientelistic networks.

#### *Source of Cohesion Rooted in Joint Struggle*

The final resource that the UDI inherited was a strong source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. The high level of cohesion and discipline among UDI leaders has been the subject of much commentary. Pollack (1999: 118), for example, writes that the UDI possesses “a high level of party discipline which is difficult to find outside Leninist structured left-wing parties.”<sup>154</sup> This characteristic has contributed to the UDI’s success in a number of respects. First, it has allowed it to stay “on-message” and avoid unsightly episodes of internal mudslinging. As will be seen in Chapter 5, this is in dramatic contrast to Argentina’s UCEDE, which was marked by constant and vicious infighting. Second, it has allowed the UDI to take a coordinated approach to party expansion, allotting resources strategically in order to maximize long-term party growth, even at the short-term expense of individual leaders’ ambitions.<sup>155</sup> This commitment to the “collective good” of the party is

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<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Luna (2010: 342).

<sup>154</sup> See also Luna (2010: 352).

<sup>155</sup> One telling illustration of this can be seen in the UDI’s gradual rollout of candidates in elections for the lower chamber during the 1990s. In the 1989 founding election, the UDI opted to run candidates in only 30 of 60 electoral districts. Over the next decade, it slowly increased this number until it had candidates nearly everywhere. According to Joignant and Navia (2003), this slow rollout was strategic. Rather than run candidates in more districts than it could possibly win, the UDI decided to focus its resources on those districts

something that UDI members frequently point to as a cause of their party's success,<sup>156</sup> and it stands in sharp contrast to the UCEDE. Finally, and most importantly, the UDI has managed to avoid the kinds of schisms that have spelt the death of other new conservative parties in Latin America, such as the UCEDE. While other new parties experienced devastating splits, the UDI managed to hang together during the difficult start-up phase.

There were at least three critical moments when the UDI might have splintered. The first was in the mid-1980s after the thawing of relations between Pinochet and the *gremialistas* and Chicago Boys. As discussed in Chapter 3, the initial impetus for the creation of the UDI was the military regime's apparent abandonment of its foundational project of neoliberalism and protected democracy, and the marginalization of many of those most associated with the project. Once it became clear that the project was safe and many *gremialistas* and Chicago Boys were reappointed to positions of influence, the UDI lost much of its reason to exist. Yet it remained intact. The second was in 1987-1988 during the UDI's short-lived fusion with the MUN and FNT to create RN. This might have resulted in the full absorption of the UDI into the new party structure, and thus the disappearance of its corporate identity. Yet this never occurred, with Sergio Onofre Jarpa going so far as to describe the UDI as the "party within the party."<sup>157</sup> After Jaime Guzmán was expelled from RN in June 1988, there

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where it thought that it had decent chances. The plan was to build a set of electoral strongholds (particularly in the greater Santiago area), and only then to attempt to expand to the rest of the country. According to Joignant and Navia (2003: 148), "[t]he logic of the UDI's territorial penetration...implies the existence of a well defined project, an iron discipline and a cohesive work team, which [allowed the party's] electoral presence to grow from already conquered zones toward places where the party has not [yet] penetrated."

<sup>156</sup> One UDI founder offered a common assessment when he asserted that the UDI's success was rooted in "teamwork," and the fact that "there are no personal ambitions, but rather a collective good, a collective aspiration. There might be ambition, but it is collective" (author's interview with UDI founder, 10 November 2011).

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Allamand (1999: 146). See also Jarpa (2002: 389-390).



was no split between former UDI activists who wished to stay in RN and those who wished to follow their old leader: instead, Guzmán took “the majority of UDI members with him and reestablish[ed] the *gremialista* party as a separate entity” (Pollack 1999: 99).<sup>158</sup> The third critical moment was during the 1990s in the face of challenges from two potential rivals: RN and the Christian Democrats. In the case of RN, much of its program was similar to that of the UDI, particularly with respect to the economy, and in 1989 it won twice as many votes as the UDI in lower-chamber elections. Moreover, “[d]uring this period, RN proposed as one of its implicit objectives the disappearance of the UDI, crushing it like a bug under the heel of a shoe” (Durruty 1999: 121-122).<sup>159</sup> The Christian Democrats, for their part, demonstrated a new ideological conservatism—particularly during the presidency of Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle (1994-2000)<sup>160</sup>—leading Gibson (1996: 228-229) to speculate about the possibility of Chilean elites switching allegiances to the party.<sup>161</sup> Yet, in stark contrast to the UCEDE after Peronist President Carlos Menem’s turn to the right (see Chapter 5), the UDI did not suffer mass defections to these larger and seemingly more promising options. Instead, they hung together, allowing the party to gain momentum and eventually establish itself as a major force.

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<sup>158</sup> There are very few exceptions to this rule. One is Maximiano Errázuriz, who was among the UDI’s founders, but decided to stay in RN. See “Reseña Biográfica Parlamentaria: Maximiano Errázuriz Eguiguren”: [http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas\\_parlamentarias/wiki/Maximiano\\_Err%C3%A1zuriz\\_Eguiguren](http://historiapolitica.bcn.cl/resenas_parlamentarias/wiki/Maximiano_Err%C3%A1zuriz_Eguiguren). Accessed on 24 June 2014.

<sup>159</sup> See also Barrett (2000: 21) and Angell (2007: 55, 72).

<sup>160</sup> According to Barrett (2000: 17), Frei was a soothing figure for the right, especially the business community: “Not only was Frei himself a successful businessman with strong contacts in that sphere, but, unlike Aylwin, his commitment to the economic model was unquestioned.” See also Silva (2002: 344).

<sup>161</sup> In Gibson’s (1996: 229) words: “The election to the presidency in 1994 of the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, an economic conservative with close ties to the business community, leaves open the possibility of an eventual shift in the party’s social bases of support.”

What is the source of the UDI's high level of cohesion and internal discipline? According to Joignant and Navia (2003, 2007), much of it has to do with the cultural homogeneity of UDI leaders, which is rooted in the common experience of attending Catholic schools and universities. This common pattern of socialization means that UDI leaders see eye-to-eye on most issues, which allows the party to present the public image of being "just one man" (Joignant and Navia 2007: 260). Yet while it is very likely that this factor has contributed to the UDI's cohesion and discipline, it is not an adequate explanation. Going to Catholic school does not instill in most people the kind of missionary political zeal that UDI leaders demonstrate. This factor also fails to explain why joining the Christian Democrats, as devout Catholics in many other countries do, is unthinkable for most UDI supporters. In order to understand how the UDI has maintained its high level of cohesion and internal discipline, it is necessary to look at historical and political factors. As Valdivia (2008b: 145) has argued, the UDI's "homogeneity is based not only in common socio-cultural origins...but [also] on a common political perspective that was articulated to an important extent in the fires of the struggle against the Popular Unity." This history of joint struggle, which actually began before the Popular Unity government and continued after its fall, has created a powerful source of cohesion for the UDI. It has led to a compelling narrative of heroism, persecution and sacrifice, which instills party members with a sense of mission or *mística*, creates a sense of camaraderie and erects barriers between them and other political forces—not only on the left, but also the Christian Democrats and the UDI's own coalition partner, RN.

One of the words that UDI activists use most often to describe their party's history is "struggle." The UDI's story, as understood by its members, is one of endless adversity, in

which it has had to fight against a host of powerful enemies whose plans for Chile would make the country, at best, a mediocrity, and at worst, a totalitarian nightmare. From an outsider's perspective, this is an odd interpretation of history. The UDI is an authoritarian successor party, and the authoritarian regime that it succeeded was guilty of widespread human rights violations. While some of the UDI's claims have bases in reality, others are clearly exaggerated. Less important than the actual events, however, is the UDI's *perception* of those events. In order to understand the UDI, it is necessary to examine the party's version of history on its own terms, since it is this shared understanding of the past that animates UDI activists, not mainstream historiography. By donning the interpretivist's hat in this way, it is possible to account for the party's high levels of cohesion and internal discipline.

The UDI's narrative of struggle begins at the Catholic University in the 1960s. As discussed in Chapter 3, it was the activities of the Christian Democrats, not the left, in student politics that initially prompted the creation of the *Movimiento Gremial*. The *gremialistas* were deeply opposed to the Christian Democratic student leaders' advocacy of university reform, believing that it went against the true nature of the university and was a harbinger of totalitarianism. Given this scenario, there was no choice but to fight. Reflecting on the origins of the movement, Jaime Guzmán (2008: 38) would later write: "I believe it is useful to transmit how decisive this experience was for my formation, having started in a condition of strict adversity. I believe that this was the common feature that marked all of those who contributed to the formation of *gremialismo* in the Catholic University in those years." As if what was happening at the university level were not bad enough, they believed that the Christian Democratic government of Eduardo Frei Montalva (1964-1970) was simultaneously contributing to the general destruction of the country. Part of this was direct

in the form of the 1967 land reform, which Guzmán (2008: 153) described as “a massive violation of one of the most basic human rights, the right to property.” The Christian Democrats’ indirect role in the destruction of Chile, however, was even worse, since Guzmán (2008: 36) believed that it was a “Marxist-Christian alliance” that had made possible Salvador Allende’s 1970 electoral victory. Specifically, Guzmán pointed to the creation of two small parties in the late 1960s, the Popular Unitary Action Movement (MAPU) and the Christian Left (IC), leftist factions of the Christian Democratic Party that split off and joined the Popular Unity (UP) coalition. As Guzmán (2008: 35) explained: “These two groups, though they were not capable of attracting a significant amount of the Christian Democratic vote, had enough electoral potential to give the Marxist candidate Salvador Allende, whom they supported in the 1970 presidential election, the necessary and decisive votes that allowed him to defeat [conservative candidate] Jorge Alessandri by a margin of one percent.”<sup>162</sup> In sum, being born in opposition to the Christian Democrats imbued the *gremialistas* with a “spirit of struggle” (Guzmán 2008: 43), and also erected a barrier between the UDI, the partisan extension of the *gremialistas*, and the Christian Democrats, that, to this day, is insurmountable.

While the struggle against the Christian Democrats had been important, “the great battle against the UP [Popular Unity]” arguably played an even more important role in the

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<sup>162</sup> Guzmán (2008: 35) also pointed to the Christian Democrats’ general shift to the left in the late 1960s: “[W]ithout a doubt, the other great importance of these groups is found in the way they dragged the Christian Democratic Party toward the left and had an influence within the organization, which was reflected in the programmatic platform of Radomiro Tomic in [the 1973] election.” Scholars of Chilean politics share this view about Tomic’s radicalism. According to Valenzuela (1978: 41), “Tomic’s platform was similar in many ways to Allende’s.” Loveman (2001: 247) writes that “[i]n a seeming attempt to appear even more revolutionary than Allende, Tomic highlighted his campaign with promises to complete agrarian reform by expropriating all the large rural estates ‘from the Andes to the sea’ (*desde la cordillera hasta el mar*).”

kind of party the UDI would eventually become.<sup>163</sup> If the Frei government had been bad, they believed the government of Salvador Allende was infinitely worse. Allende's democratic election to the presidency and his stated commitment to constitutionalism, in their view, did not mean that he was a democrat.<sup>164</sup> Instead, his Marxist ideology and actions in office indicated that his true goal was to establish totalitarianism in Chile. As UDI founder Pablo Longueira (2003: 78) recalled, during the UP years Chile was divided into "two irreconcilable bands: on the one hand, the Marxists that wanted to convert Chile into a second Cuba, that is, to install a totalitarian dictatorship like the ones found in many countries in the world, where murders and human rights violations had been carried out for decades; and on the other, those who opposed them." Guzmán (2008: 112) concurred: "At the end of the 1960s and especially between 1970 and 1973, Chile lived the dramatic experience of how a democracy was destroyed by the joint onslaught of Marxist totalitarianism, socializing statism, terrorism, subversive violence and demagogy, until we were driven to the verge of civil war and an irreversible totalitarian state." Fortunately, according to the UDI's telling of the story, Allende's totalitarian designs never came to pass, thanks to "the majority who struggled heroically" (Longueira 2003: 78). In this "struggle for liberty," the *gremialistas* played a special role, becoming "the vanguard of the struggle against the Popular Unity" (Guzmán 2008: 63-64). They helped to channel "the cry of rebellion from a people that did not accept that a minority subject it to a totalitarian and foreign doctrine" (Guzmán 2008: 100). Eventually, the military responded to "the popular clamor

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<sup>163</sup> See UDI (1999: 9).

<sup>164</sup> According to Guzmán (2008: 92), "no one disputes that the government of Allende was legitimate in its origin, since it came from the application of the mechanisms established in the Political Constitution for the election of the President of the Republic. But it is an indisputable fact that it lost said legitimacy during its time in office by distancing itself in a grave and reiterated way from the Constitution, such that Chilean institutions were practically destroyed."

to liberate Chile from Marxism” (Longueira 2003: 78) and overthrew Allende. However, this was not a coup, nor was Chile still a democracy in 1973.<sup>165</sup> As Guzmán (2008: 98-99) emphatically put it: “*On September 11<sup>th</sup>, THERE WAS NEITHER DEMOCRACY NOR INSTITUTIONS IN CHILE. The only thing left to discuss was what was going to replace it: either a Marxist dictatorship, euphemistically called ‘popular’, or a military government that could remake Chilean institutions.*”<sup>166</sup>

The perception of having jointly struggled against a diabolical enemy gave the future founders of the UDI a powerful sense of mission or *mística*,<sup>167</sup> a concept they constantly refer to in interviews and party literature, as well as a deep conviction that Chile must never return to the bad old days. UDI founder Sergio Fernández (1994: 14) expressed this fear of going backward while explaining why he had opposed a quick return to democracy: “The military regime was accused of prolonging itself in power for the mere pleasure of doing so. But this accusation ignored the true horror of ‘returning to the previous regime,’ which had led to governments such as that of Allende. In this way, the fear was similar to that of Germany with regard to Hitler and Nazism.”<sup>168</sup> This “horror” of the past played a fundamental role in

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<sup>165</sup> UDI members never refer to the events of 11 September 1973 as a coup, preferring instead terms such as “military uprising” (*pronunciamiento*) or even “exit of the Allende government” (*salida del gobierno de Allende*). They also do not refer to the 1973-1990 regime as a “dictatorship,” preferring to call it a “military government” (*gobierno militar*) or “military regime” (*régimen militar*). Interestingly, Guzmán (2008: 113) himself had no qualms about describing the regime as a dictatorship: “[B]etween anarchy and dictatorship, since time immemorial people have always opted for dictatorship. And if it is only a matter of choosing between dictatorships, this will always be done—by myself included—in favor of the one that seems most convenient or least inconvenient. Moreover, sometimes the option (as occurred in Chile in 1973) is between dictatorship and totalitarianism. In this event, dictatorship will always be preferable.”

<sup>166</sup> Capital letters and italics in the original text.

<sup>167</sup> Author’s interviews with UDI founder, 25 October 2011; local UDI leader, 3 November 2011; national UDI leader, 7 November 2011; national UDI leader, 10 November 2011; local UDI leader, 29 November 2011; and national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

<sup>168</sup> Jaime Guzmán (2008: 112-113) also used the Hitler analogy: “The dramatic shadow of the case of National Socialism or Nazism, which in Germany attained absolute power through the tools of democracy and universal

determining the actions of the *gremialistas* and later the UDI. Most obviously, it compelled them to collaborate with the military regime.<sup>169</sup> But it also affected their relations with other civilian political actors, instilling a general distrust toward all those who had been active in electoral politics before 1973. According to Longueira (2003: 27), this distrust of politicians from the old days was an important factor in the decision to create the UDI: “For Jaime Guzmán, all that had occurred since 11 September 1973 made no sense if, with the beginning of the political opening, the only political parties that emerged were the same ones that, with the same leaders and vices of the past, had led us to the institutional crisis...[of the] Marxist government of Salvador Allende.” For obvious reasons, this included leftist parties and the Christian Democrats. However, it also applied to the traditional right, as embodied by politicians who had belonged to the Conservative, Liberal and National Parties.<sup>170</sup> These were perhaps the best of a bad bunch, but they still belonged to a discredited political class that, in the eyes of UDI founders, had nearly allowed Chile to fall to Marxist totalitarianism through its inattention and incompetence. The fact that some of them had been willing to join forces with unrepentant Christian Democrats and Socialists and sign the 1985 National Accord for a Transition to Full Democracy (see Chapter 3), and to do so again to negotiate constitutional reforms following the 1988 plebiscite, only served to underline that they were part of the problem, not part of the solution. This hostility toward the traditional right contributed to the failure of the 1987-1988 attempt to create a

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suffrage, with which Hitler destroyed the naïve Weimar Republic, was imminently to be repeated in our country in order to implant Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism, which is just as disgraceful as Hitlerian National Socialism.”

<sup>169</sup> According to an internal history of the party, following the coup on 11 September 1973, Guzmán “prayed to give thanks for the liberation of Chile,” and “understood that [he and his collaborators] had to support and join the new government of the Armed Forces and *Carabineros* [Police]” (UDI 1999: 12).

<sup>170</sup> As Valdivia (2008b: 158) notes: “The struggle of the UDI from 1983 to 1986 focused on three fronts: its rivalry with the other rights, the legal exclusion of Marxism and the defense of its own project.”

single conservative party under the RN label. It also meant that when Jaime Guzmán was expelled from RN, virtually all members of the formerly independent UDI followed him as he resurrected the UDI as an independent entity. They had never belonged in RN, and they were happy to go.

The struggle continued after the military regime was established. Surprisingly, at times this meant fighting against what the *gremialistas* saw as less enlightened fellow regime collaborators, as in the case of Jaime Guzmán's spats in the 1970s with those whom he denounced as "fascists." This fight against wrongheaded regime allies continued after 1983, when Sergio Onofre Jarpa, the former president of the National Party, became interior minister. Indeed, as described in Chapter 3, it was the catalyst for the creation of the UDI, and it meant that the party was "born in a climate of special adversity," being "frowned upon by a good part of the authorities of the very government with which it had so intensely collaborated."<sup>171</sup> After the formation of the UDI in September 1983, the struggle against the ill-conceived notions of other regime collaborators continued: "During 1984, the UDI immersed itself in a solitary struggle to ensure that the Political Constitution of 1980 was, on the one hand, upheld, and, on the other, accepted. That is, it sought to ensure that the Pinochet government was not tempted by other formulas that moved it away from the path established in the constitution or from the economic framework, and that the opposition parties opted to follow the route that the constitution laid out in order to achieve full democracy by 1988" (Durruty 1999: 73-74). Even in the late 1980s, after relations between the UDI and the military regime had improved, Guzmán (2008: 186) expressed exasperation

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<sup>171</sup> See UDI (1999: 20).



at his nominal allies in the military regime when he asserted that the UDI was “virtually the only movement that is not in favor of modifying the [1980] Constitution.”

But the most intense—and consequential—struggle continued to be the struggle against what the UDI considered to be the violent, totalitarian left. They confronted this enemy directly via their work through the *Departamento Poblacional*, whose stated purpose was to “fight the Communists, inch by inch, in every *población* in the country.”<sup>172</sup> The story they tell of this period is one of heroism, persecution and, ultimately, martyrdom. As Longueira (2003: 30) recalls, during these years UDI leaders “shared with our *poblacional* base leaders the implacable persecution of left-wing groups that monopolized the popular zones. Despite the fact that these were the years of the military government, those truly persecuted were our leaders, who suffered daily the physical and psychological terror of the extreme left.” In their forays into the country’s slums, UDI activists and their local supporters experienced threats and physical attacks.<sup>173</sup> The most dramatic attack was the April 1986 assassination of *poblador* and UDI activist Simón Yévenes, probably by the Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front, a guerrilla group linked to the Communist party.<sup>174</sup> In the process, Yévenes was converted into “the first martyr of the UDI,”<sup>175</sup> or even the “Martyr of the Poor.”<sup>176</sup> Whatever the

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<sup>172</sup> See Soto (2001) and Pinto (2006).

<sup>173</sup> Longueira described these threats as follows: “I know that I might be their target at any moment. All UDI leaders are in the crosshairs of the communists, because our objective is to continue generating in the *poblaciones* an alternative for people who are made desperate by the control exercised by the Marxists. We have seen how the person who doesn’t go out to protest on the appointed day has rocks thrown at his house, or if [a person] doesn’t light a candle when they are ordered, the organization breaks all of his windows. As a result, the Marxists have people under their orders without having control of their thoughts or their vote—far from it.” Quoted in Soto (2001: 17). See also Pinto (2006: 129-141).

<sup>174</sup> See “Masiva Despedida en Cementerio Metropolitano: Pesar en Funerales del Dirigente Simón Yévenes,” *El Mercurio*, 5 April 1986. See also Valdivia (2008c: 223).

<sup>175</sup> See UDI (1999: 22).

<sup>176</sup> See Longueira (2003: 106).

intentions of his assassins, their action contributed to the UDI's narrative of sacrifice in the face of a truly evil enemy. As Jaime Guzmán stated to the press the day after the assassination: "The martyrdom of Simón Yévenes serves to redouble the effort within our movement, born from the deepest and most noble roots of the spirit stemming from an ideal to the service of a free Chile, values in the name of which each of our members is willing to give up even his life, if necessary."<sup>177</sup> It also made more plausible the UDI's claim that it was the true friend of the poor and the left their enemy, which Guzmán had expressed in a 1985 speech: "We are together with the *pobladores*, collaborating with them so that they can organize themselves in defense of their own security in the face of the alliance between communists and criminals that seek to sow terror in the *poblaciones* through vandalism and thuggery. The UDI is the only real alternative in the face of Marxism in the *poblaciones*, and since the *pobladores* are the ones who suffer most directly the effects of communist violence, our political movement continues and will continue to grow."<sup>178</sup>

But the most dramatic episode in the UDI's history of struggle came in April 1991 with the assassination of party founder Jaime Guzmán himself.<sup>179</sup> It is impossible to overstate Guzmán's importance to the UDI. Although he was concerned that the UDI would become a "*guzmanista*" vehicle rather than an institutionalized party and made efforts to avert this possible outcome,<sup>180</sup> in truth the UDI was so intimately tied to the figure of Jaime Guzmán that it initially had personalistic characteristics. In the words of one UDI

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<sup>177</sup> Quoted in Pinto (2006: 137).

<sup>178</sup> Quoted in Pinto (2006: 180).

<sup>179</sup> For a detailed analysis of the assassination published by the Jaime Guzmán Foundation, see Olivares (2012).

<sup>180</sup> See Pinto (2006: 117). Also author's interviews with UDI founder, 26 October 2011, and another UDI founder, 17 May 2012.

leader: “Jaime was the UDI. He created it. He was the soul of the UDI.”<sup>181</sup> As another puts it: “It was indisputable. It was clear that the party belonged to Jaime Guzmán. Whoever didn’t like that was in the wrong party.”<sup>182</sup> To this day, UDI members have a level of reverence and affection for Guzmán not found in many new conservative parties in Latin America, with the exception of El Salvador’s ARENA, where Roberto D’Aubuisson occupies a similar position (see Chapter 6 and 7). Unprompted, UDI leaders frequently refer to Guzmán’s intelligence, leadership and vision, and often quote aphorisms that he coined in order to illustrate their points.<sup>183</sup> They also never refer to him by his last name alone, in contrast to UCEDE founder Álvaro Alsogaray, who is usually referred to as “Alsogaray” or “the engineer,” his formal title (see Chapter 5). Instead, he is referred to as “Jaime Guzmán,” or, more common still, simply as “Jaime.” This is true even for young UDI activists who never met him. In short, Guzmán’s importance to the UDI was extraordinary. In the slightly tongue-in-cheek but accurate words of one important RN leader: “I was never a friend of Jaime Guzmán, but no one who met him could but admire his talent, penetrating intelligence and friendliness. He exercised in the UDI an all-encompassing leadership: leader, ideologue, organizer, fundraiser, philosopher, friend, professor, marriage counselor, spiritual assistant, know-it-all, [and] maximum inspiration” (Allamand 1999: 275).<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Author’s interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

<sup>182</sup> Author’s interview with UDI founder, 17 May 2012.

<sup>183</sup> For example, to highlight the importance of maintaining a grassroots presence, they quote Guzmán’s aphorism that “politics is 10 percent inspiration (*inspiración*) and 90 legwork (*transpiración*).” Author’s interviews.

<sup>184</sup> Pollack (1999: 159) offers a similar description: “Guzmán created a made-to-measure party of ex-colleagues and ex-students. UDI organized itself around its master. He created the doctrine, the strategic changes and the tactical shifts. Guzmán did everything, including fund-raising and the designation of important posts.”

Given Jaime Guzmán's central importance to the UDI, one might have predicted that his death would also spell the death of the party. Yet the opposite occurred. The UDI not only survived, but grew stronger. His death triggered a wave of sympathy for the UDI, with thousands of people joining the party in solidarity, including several prominent leaders of the military regime, such as Hernán Büchi and José Piñera.<sup>185</sup> Even more importantly, Guzmán's assassination by leftist extremists—once again, by the Communist Party-linked Manuel Rodríguez Patriotic Front<sup>186</sup>—served as the perfect climax to the UDI's epic self-told tale of struggle and persecution. The fact that Guzmán's last major address in the Senate had been about the continuing danger of leftist terrorism in Chile, in which he urged Congress not to grant President Aylwin the power to pardon captured terrorists,<sup>187</sup> gave his assassination an almost preternatural resonance. Indeed, some members of the UDI would later describe Guzmán's "martyrdom" in prophetic terms.<sup>188</sup> By all accounts, the violent death of their maximum leader served to tighten the bonds among an already tightknit group of UDI leaders. As one UDI leader recalled:<sup>189</sup>

From the Military Hospital, where Jaime died at around 9 or 10 pm, we went to Jovino Novoa's house, and we made a kind of pact...to change our lives in order to dedicate ourselves to doing everything possible to ensure that the UDI did not die

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<sup>185</sup> This was not completely spontaneous. Rather, UDI leaders consciously took advantage of the moment by organizing its countrywide "I am with Jaime" campaign, whose aim was to incorporate new members. See Pollack (1999: 159) and Otano (2006: 215-217).

<sup>186</sup> See Huneeus (2007: 469).

<sup>187</sup> See Otano (2006: 205).

<sup>188</sup> This can be seen, for example, in Longueira's (2003: 31) account of a meal between UDI leaders two days after the assassination of Simón Yévenes: "I will never forget the meal in Jaime's apartment on Wednesday, 4 April [1986], with Andrés Chadwick, Luis Cordero and me, together with our wives, where he asked us whether we were willing to continue with the UDI, because one of those present that night could be the next target of an attack. We all agreed to continue with our commitment and to share the risk with those *poblacional* leaders. Five years later, Jaime was assassinated." See also Durruty (1999: 77).

<sup>189</sup> Author's interview with national UDI leader, 8 March 2012.

with Jaime, knowing that Jaime was the soul of the UDI. And I think that all of us, in one way or another, kept our word in the sense that...we managed to create a very hardworking and homogeneous team, with, I would say, very few internal disputes that might wear us down. Very few. I would say none. So, there was a kind of very powerful force that I believe allowed us to grow in subsequent years.

As explained by another UDI leader, Guzmán's sacrifice served to increase their devotion to the cause. They told themselves: " 'This has to continue. We have to keep going with Jaime's project, now that he has been transformed into a martyr...' And I think this is natural. This is what martyrs generate. This happens with all martyrs. [They] generate an adhesion, a commitment to continue with [the martyr's] cause.'<sup>190</sup> In short, the "martyrdom" of Jaime Guzmán was a fitting end to the UDI's history of joint struggle, and it served to reinforce existing party attributes that had already served as a powerful source of cohesion: a powerful sense of mission or *mística*, feelings of camaraderie among UDI leaders and an intense distrust of rival political forces, all of which reduced the likelihood of schism.

The UDI's cohesion is particularly striking when compared to RN, which has long been known for its "fratricidal rivalries" and "[p]ersistent fighting," which have "limited the party's possibilities for growth and even put its survival in danger" (Barozet and Aubry 2005: 179, 174). Unlike the UDI, which tends not to air its dirty laundry in public and has suffered few departures of prominent party leaders, RN has been marked by highly public mudslinging and suffered multiple defections.<sup>191</sup> Why has RN not enjoyed the same degree

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<sup>190</sup> Author's interview with UDI founder, 17 May 2012. RN leader Andrés Allamand (1999: 277) had a similar interpretation, writing: "[Guzmán's] assassination injected an enormous spirit of mission into the entire UDI."

<sup>191</sup> Three prominent examples capture this reality. The first was in 1992 in an episode known as "Piñeragate," when potential RN presidential candidates Sebastián Piñera and Evelyn Matthei were involved in a messy scandal involving spying, taped conversations and attempts to bias the press against one another (Boylan 1997: 212). Matthei eventually resigned from RN and joined the UDI. The second was in 1997 when Jarpa resigned from the RN, and later helped to form a new organization called "Chilefuturo" together with other *Pinochetistas* (Barozet and Aubry 2005: 177). Finally, in early 2014, three liberal RN deputies resigned from the party, and formed a new political movement called *Amplitud*, and were later joined by a prominent RN senator, Lily Pérez, and hundreds of former RN members. See "Tres diputados renuncian a RN y anuncian nuevo referente:

of cohesion as the UDI? One important factor seems to be the dissimilar personal trajectories of RN leaders: while some of them had participated in the military regime (e.g., Jarpa), others were critics of the military regime (e.g., Allamand, Piñera). This gave RN a mixed quality that distinguished it from the UDI. As described above, because RN was partially founded by authoritarian incumbents such as Sergio Onofre Jarpa, it meets the definition of an authoritarian successor party, and benefited from at least some forms of authoritarian inheritance (e.g., clientelistic networks built by mayors). Nevertheless, the presence of critics of the dictatorship among its leaders meant that it was always a less pure example of an authoritarian successor party than the UDI. This mixed character deprived it of a crucial kind of authoritarian inheritance: a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. While all future RN leaders had opposed the government of Salvador Allende, thereafter their struggles diverged: some collaborated with the military regime, while others became critics of the regime. This meant that, from the beginning, RN was a “marriage of convenience” (Boylan 1997: 200), and not a particularly happy one. In 2014, RN leaders still could not agree about what should be the party’s stance toward the military regime.<sup>192</sup> RN’s infighting may help to explain why it eventually lost its position as Chile’s biggest conservative party, overtaken by the far more cohesive UDI.<sup>193</sup> If anything, the UDI became

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Amplitud,” *Emol.com*, 7 January 2014, <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2014/01/07/638541/la-renuncia-de-parlamentarios-a-rn.html> (accessed on 24 June 2014); “Senadora Lily Pérez se integra al movimiento Amplitud a pocos días de renunciar a RN,” *Emol.com*, 20 January 2014, <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2014/01/20/640642/senadora-lily-perez-se-integra-al-movimiento-amplitud.html> (accessed on 24 June 2014); and “Más de 500 militantes renuncian a RN y fichan en movimiento Amplitud,” *La Tercera*, 7 June 2014.

<sup>192</sup> See “Allamand propone excluir de declaración de principios de RN alusión a gobierno militar,” *La Tercera*, 4 January 2014.

<sup>193</sup> RN leader Andrés Allamand (1999: 285, 126) noted this difference, asserting that the UDI is a “party with a cohesion and tactical discipline that I have always admired,” and describing it as follows: “The political identity of the UDI was very strong. It had advantages not just over [other groups on the right], but, as it would prove later, over the entire Chilean political spectrum: an undisputed internal leadership, a sense of discipline similar

even more cohesive after Jaime Guzmán's assassination, setting it even further apart from RN. As Durruty (1999: 147) observes: "While RN was bleeding to death as a result of internal fighting...the UDI, attacked from without, was strengthened in its leadership."

### A Note on the "Binomial" System

Before concluding, it is necessary to examine Chile's electoral formula—the so-called "binomial" system—and what role, if any, it played in the UDI's success under democracy.<sup>194</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, this unusual electoral formula sets Chile apart from other Latin America countries, which have either proportional representation or mixed-member proportional systems. The binomial system was introduced by the military authorities after Pinochet's defeat in the 1988 plebiscite, and one of its explicit objectives was to overrepresent conservative parties in Congress. The military authorities believed that one of the precipitants of the pre-1973 political crisis that had led to military intervention was excessive polarization in the party system. As such, they "sought to design an electoral formula that would help lead to centripetal competition, party system integration, and eventually, the establishment of a two-party system or limited multipartism" (Siavelis 1997: 656). While the most obvious way of attaining this goal would have been through a simple plurality system such as the one found in the United States or Great Britain, this option was

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to that of the barracks, an unmistakable political style, a sense of belonging to the group as deep as it was non-negotiable, a *mística* that seemed to come from another epoch and an unstoppable vocation for power." He believed that this difference between the two parties helped to explain why RN was eventually overtaken by the UDI. As he explains, "[f]or the press, RN was a very disorganized party," and "I am sure that RN was punished less for its policies than for the climate of internal conflict that reflected outward" (Allamand 1999: 285-286).

<sup>194</sup> On the binomial system, see Siavelis (1997, 2008); Magar et al. (1998); and Pastor (2004).

ruled out because, based on the regime's estimate that conservative parties could count on only about 40 percent of the popular vote, this electoral formula would have resulted in "the near exclusion of parties of the right from congress" (Siavelis 1997: 657).

The solution to this conundrum—the desire to avoid excessive pluralism in the party system, but an unwillingness to adopt a plurality electoral formula—was the so-called "binomial" system.<sup>195</sup> In this system, the Chamber of Deputies is elected from 60 electoral districts, each of which sends two representatives. (The Senate follows the same rules, but with only 19 electoral districts.) In the voting booth, voters choose a single candidate from two-candidate open lists (typically, there are only two major lists). The top vote-getter from each of the two top vote-getting lists wins a seat in Congress, *unless* the first-place list doubles the percentage of votes of the second-place list. If this occurs, then both candidates from the first-place list win seats. Technically, this is a form of proportional representation. In practice, however, the low district magnitude (two seats per district) has the potential to produce highly disproportionate results. It is possible for a third-place candidate to win a seat and a second-place candidate to be denied a seat if the second-place candidate's list fails to double the percentage won by the second-place list (see below for an illustration). In designing this system, the authorities calculated that it would overrepresent conservative parties supportive of the military regime. As Siavelis (1997: 657) explains: "In each district, to obtain one seat, a party or coalition must have at least 33.4% of the votes of the two largest parties or coalitions, and to win both seats it must win 66.7% of said vote. The military and parties of the right doubted that the electoral list of the democratic opposition would be able to muster 66.7% of the vote across districts nationally. Therefore, the

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<sup>195</sup> This section draws heavily on Siavelis (1997).



binomial system would enable the right to win one of the two seats in each district (or 50% of the seats) with only 40% of the vote” (Siavelis 1997: 657).

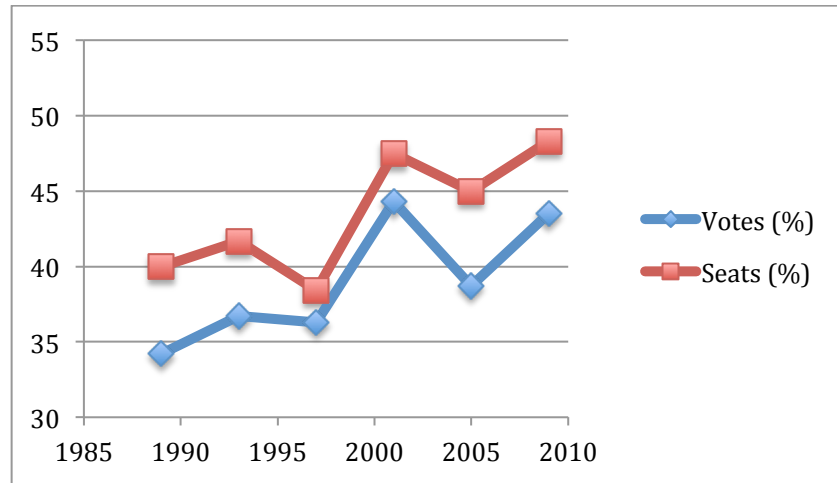
Given the binomial system’s potential for disproportionate results, and the fact that it was chosen with the express purpose of overrepresenting conservative parties in Congress, might this be the true cause of the UDI’s success? One instance in which it clearly helped the UDI was in the high-profile race for Senate in one of Santiago electoral districts in 1989, in which UDI founder Jaime Guzmán won a seat thanks to the binomial system.<sup>196</sup> In that election, the two top individual vote-getters were from the center-left *Concertación* list: Christian Democrat Andrés Zaldívar (31.3 percent) and Party for Democracy (PPD)<sup>197</sup> candidate Ricardo Lagos (30.6 percent). Jaime Guzmán came in a distant third place with 17.2 percent. However, because the *Concertación* list failed to double the percentage won by the list to which the UDI belonged (61.9 percent and 32.5 percent, respectively), Zaldívar and Guzmán won seats, while Lagos, who had beaten Guzmán by a large margin, was denied a seat. In this case, then, the UDI clearly benefited from the binomial system. More generally, the system appears to have achieved its designers’ objective of overrepresenting the right in Congress. As Figure 4.3 indicates, the center-right coalition of the UDI and RN has, over the years, tended to win a larger percentage of seats in the Chamber of Deputies than its percentage of the popular vote—albeit not to the degree sometimes believed.

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<sup>196</sup> This section draws heavily on Pastor (2004: 45-47).

<sup>197</sup> The PPD was created by Chilean Socialists in the late 1980s as an umbrella party for forces opposed to the dictatorship, and as a means of sidestepping the regime’s restriction on leftist parties. See Plumb (1998).

Figure 4.3. Votes vs. Seats for UDI-RN Coalition<sup>198</sup>



Nevertheless, there are several reasons to doubt that the UDI's success was caused by the binomial system rather than, as I have argued, authoritarian inheritance. First, and most importantly, the binomial system does what all electoral formulas do: it translates votes into seats. The contours of this system can tell us a great deal about why a party (or coalition) wins the amount of seats that it does. What it cannot tell is why a party wins the amount of *votes* that it does. It is even less helpful for explaining change over time—something that, in the case of the UDI, is crucial, given that the party saw its vote share more than double over the years (see Figure 4.2). If the same electoral system has been in place for all of this time, how can it explain the growth of UDI's share of the vote? Second, the notion that the binomial system was of decisive importance is difficult to sustain when one puts the UDI in comparative perspective. Several countries in Latin America have produced successful new conservative parties, yet Chile is the only one that uses the binomial system. El Salvador, for example, uses a more conventional proportional

<sup>198</sup> Data from Siavelis (2013: 206).

representation system to elect its unicameral legislature, yet this has not prevented it from producing a strong conservative party in the form of ARENA (see Chapters 6 and 7). The success of parties such as ARENA and Brazil's PFL cannot be explained by the binomial system, for the simple reason that the countries in which these parties operate do not have the binomial system. Finally, even if one prefers to focus on the number of seats rather than the number of votes, it is not clear that the UDI has derived any great advantage from the binomial system. To be sure, there are examples of UDI candidates winning seats thanks to the system, as in the case of Jaime Guzmán in 1989 (see above). Yet such cases do not appear to represent a broader pattern. For example, in its debut election of 1989, only 3 of the UDI's 14 deputies won through "unfair" means, i.e., they came in third place in their districts but still won a seat (while the second-place candidate from the *Concertación* was denied a seat).<sup>199</sup> Of the other 11 UDI deputies elected that year, 9 came in second place<sup>200</sup> and 2 actually came in first place.<sup>201</sup> In short, it is likely that the bulk of the UDI's deputies elected in 1989 would have also won under a proportional system.

In fact, the binomial system may have actually resulted in the UDI's level of support being *undercounted* for the first decade of the party's life. This is because, in the first few elections in which the UDI participated, it did not run candidates in all 60 of Chile's electoral districts. In the 1989 founding election for the Chamber of Deputies, the UDI ran

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<sup>199</sup> These were Juan Antonio Coloma, Cristián Leay and Carlos Recondo (based on author's examination of data from Chile's Servicio Electoral).

<sup>200</sup> These were Francisco Bartolucci, Andrés Chadwick, Sergio Correa de la Cerda, Pablo Longueira, Juan Masferrer, Patricio Melero, Jaime Orpis, Pedro Guzmán and Jorge Ulloa (based on author's examination of data from Chile's Servicio Electoral).

<sup>201</sup> These were Carlos Bombal and Víctor Pérez (based on author's examination of data from Chile's Servicio Electoral).

candidates in only 30 of 60 districts.<sup>202</sup> In 1993, this number actually decreased to 29. In 1997, the UDI ran candidates in 47 districts, and in 2001, it ran candidates in 54 districts. There are different accounts of why the UDI ran candidates in only half of the country's districts during the first two parliamentary elections, and why it took more than a decade to start running candidates in all districts.<sup>203</sup> The important point is that, for several years, many Chileans did not have the option of voting for the UDI, for the simple reason that the UDI did not run candidates in their districts. As Joignant and Navia (2003: 144) explain: "While in 1993, only 54 percent of voters had the option of voting for an UDI candidate in the Chamber of Deputies, in December of 2001, 93.3% of voters could opt for an UDI candidate if they so desired." It is difficult to know what percentage of the vote the UDI would have won under a more traditional system of proportional representation, or if it had run candidates in all 60 districts from the beginning under the binomial system. This is especially difficult to know because, during its early years, the UDI seems to have consciously run candidates only in those districts where it believed that it had a decent chance of winning.<sup>204</sup> It is very likely, though, that the UDI's vote share in the 1990s would have been higher if the party had run candidates in all districts. In Joignant and Navia's (2003: 144) words: "[I]t is certain that the UDI would have obtained a larger share of the vote than 12.1% in 1993 if [it] had presented candidates in the 31 districts in which [it]

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<sup>202</sup> All figures in this paragraph are from Joignant and Navia (2003).

<sup>203</sup> At least three theories exist. First, many UDI leaders claim that the party simply did not have enough good candidates (author's interviews). Second, in an official history of the party, the UDI (1999: 24) claims that it was because of discrimination: "In those elections [1989], the UDI had to compete at a disadvantage. After arduous and tense negotiations, it [the UDI] was not permitted to run candidates in more than half of all deputy districts." Finally, Joignant and Navia (2003) argue that the UDI consciously ran candidates only in districts where it thought that it could win, as part of a long-term party-building strategy.

<sup>204</sup> See Joignant and Navia (2003).

abstained. This means that the increase of votes in 2001 is due—at least in part—to the capacity of the party to take advantage of the latent *gremialista* vote that did not have the possibility of voting for this party in 1993 and 1997.” For all of these reasons, then, it is doubtful that the true cause of the UDI’s success was the binomial system.

### Conclusion

In this chapter and in Chapter 3, I examined the case of the UDI, a clear case of successful conservative party-building and an authoritarian successor party. I argued that the UDI’s success and its status as an authoritarian successor party were linked: because of its roots in a high-performing authoritarian regime that came to power in the midst of a powerful leftist threat, the UDI was the beneficiary of valuable forms of authoritarian inheritance. Paradoxically, its roots in dictatorship helped it to succeed under democracy. It was not inevitable that a strong conservative party would eventually emerge in Chile. By the 1970s, the country’s traditional conservative parties had dramatically weakened and, in line with those who have argued that there is a connection between conservative party strength and democratic stability,<sup>205</sup> the Chilean right suddenly became willing to “knock on the barracks door.” As will be discussed in the next chapter, Argentina faced a similar situation during much of the twentieth century: lacking a strong conservative party, it experienced repeated bouts of right-wing authoritarianism. Its last and most violent period of authoritarian rule occurred between 1976 and 1983, in a regime that resembled the Chilean dictatorship in a number of respects. Yet the two regimes parted company in a crucial

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<sup>205</sup> See Chapter 1.

respect: while the Chilean regime served as a springboard for successful conservative party-building, the Argentine regime failed to produce a viable conservative authoritarian successor party. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the most important new conservative party that emerged in Argentina at the end of military rule, the UCEDE, had much stronger democratic credentials than the UDI. Lacking authoritarian inheritance, however, it would fail to take root.

## CHAPTER 5

### Argentina's UCEDE: Democratic Credentials and Party-Building Failure

In the days after Argentina's May 1989 general election, Álvaro Alsogaray, the founder and historic leader of the Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE),<sup>1</sup> the country's largest conservative party, received some astonishing news.<sup>2</sup> During the election, the UCEDE had campaigned on a promise to carry out sweeping free-market reforms. The winner of the election, Peronist candidate Carlos Menem, had campaigned on the opposite, promising to initiate a "productive revolution" and to introduce a "big salary increase" (*salariazo*).<sup>3</sup> After winning, however, Menem dramatically changed course, and was now reaching out to the UCEDE: not only did he embrace much of its economic program, he wanted some its leaders' help putting it into practice. In the following months and years, a host of UCEDE leaders would be appointed to important policymaking and administrative positions in the Menem government, where they would help to carry out one of the most far-reaching programs of neoliberal reform in Latin American history.<sup>4</sup> In one respect, this was a blessing for the UCEDE: though a relatively small party, several of its most visible leaders now held positions of power from which they could help to put into effect many of the party's most cherished policies. In another respect, however, it was a curse. As Menem

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<sup>1</sup> As the *Unión del Centro Democrático* (Union of the Democratic Center), the acronym initially used by the party was "UCD." It was soon discovered, however, that an existing party, the *Unión Cristiana Democrática* (Democratic Christian Union), already had rights to the acronym "UCD," and the party that is the subject of this chapter was forced to find a new acronym. Thereafter, it abbreviated its name either as "UCEDE" or "UCeDé." See Domán and Olivera (1989: 221) and Gutiérrez (1992: 70).

<sup>2</sup> See Alsogaray (1993: 162).

<sup>3</sup> See Stokes (2001: 45-46).

<sup>4</sup> See Levitsky (2003: 2).

pulled his Peronist Party (PJ) rightward, UCEDE leaders and supporters abandoned it in droves in favor of the new phenomenon of *Menemismo*. By the mid-1990s, the UCEDE had withered to electoral insignificance (see Figure 5.1), a clear case of party-building failure.

The demise of the UCEDE was a somewhat surprising outcome, given the significant gains that the party had made in previous years and many observers' high expectations for it. Like Chile's UDI, the UCEDE was created in 1982 in the context of a military regime crisis and the possibility of an imminent transition to democracy.<sup>5</sup> Earlier in the year, Argentina's military authorities had attempted to generate popular support by launching an invasion of the British-controlled Falkland/Malvinas Islands, which Argentina had long claimed as part of its national territory. After Argentine troops surrendered two and a half months later, it became clear that the military regime would not survive. It was against this backdrop that, in June 1982, Alsogaray, once described by *The New York Times* as "the high priest of free-market economics in Argentina,"<sup>6</sup> decided to found the UCEDE in order to compete in an eventual democratic regime. While it won a mere 1.6 percent of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies in the 1983 "founding election," the UCEDE quickly established itself as the preferred party of Argentine elites and saw its vote share grow rapidly in subsequent elections. The emergence of the UCEDE generated considerable hype. Noting that it had become "the country's fastest-growing political party, and its third electoral force," Gibson (1990: 183, 180) wrote that "[t]he rise of the UCEDE has been widely greeted as evidence that the long-sought democratic mass conservative party might be

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<sup>5</sup> In both countries, the major precipitant of the regime crisis was the 1982 debt crisis, which took a devastating toll on each country's economy. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Chilean regime ultimately survived the crisis, though many believed (or feared) that it was in danger of collapsing, including the founders of the UDI.

<sup>6</sup> See Shirley Christian, "Buenos Aires Journal; Tango With Peronist? Who's Afraid?," *The New York Times*, 4 July 1989.



in the making.” Similarly, Borón (2000: 159) would later assert that the UCEDE was, “undoubtedly, the most serious attempt Argentine capitalists have ever made to construct a modern conservative party.” Nevertheless, the UCEDE failed to take root and today is little more than a footnote in Argentine history. What explains the UCEDE’s failure?

In this chapter, I argue that much of the UCEDE’s failure can be explained by the absence of authoritarian inheritance. Although the UCEDE, like the UDI, was founded in anticipation of an imminent transition to democracy, was strongly committed to the free market and had an upper-class core constituency, the two parties had very different relationships to their countries’ most recent military regimes. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the UDI was an authoritarian successor party, with deep roots in an authoritarian regime that, while extremely violent and less competent than sometimes believed, could also claim some significant accomplishments and was able to leave office largely on its own terms. This allowed the UDI to inherit a number of valuable resources, including a popular and well-known brand, territorial organization, business connections, clientelistic networks and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. The UCEDE, in contrast, had none of these things. It was not an authoritarian successor party, and was born with very limited stocks of starting political capital. While Alsogaray was a prominent public figure and, as such, the brand of *Alsogaraismo* was relatively well-known, this brand had little mass appeal. In addition, the UCEDE had virtually no territorial organization, lacked access to clientelistic networks and was viewed with skepticism by business elites. Finally, because the UCEDE’s leaders had never “fought in the trenches” together in an authoritarian regime, the party was prone to vicious infighting and, eventually, would suffer mass defections. Thus, while the

Menem government was undoubtedly the catalyst of the UCEDE's collapse, I argue that the seeds of that collapse had been planted long before.

In order to make this argument, this chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I discuss the long history of collaboration between economic elites and the military in Argentina. Lacking a viable conservative party to represent their interests, Argentine elites became infamous for their willingness to “knock on the barracks door.” I also discuss the parallels between the military regime that took power in Argentina in 1976 and the military regime that took power in Chile in 1973. In the second section, I ask why, given the parallels between the Argentine and Chilean regimes, no “Argentine UDI” formed. I argue that this was the result of one of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: performance of the authoritarian regime. While the Chilean regime could claim some significant accomplishments, the Argentine regime was an utter failure, mismanaging the economy and leading the country to military defeat. I argue that these dissimilar regime performances, in turn, were partially endogenous to a second critical antecedent: level of threat prior to the onset of military rule. In the third section, I discuss the formation and growth of the UCEDE. I illustrate that it was not an authoritarian successor party, and that it was born with very limited stocks of starting political capital. In the fourth section, I discuss the collapse of the UCEDE. I show that this was the result of defections by UCEDE leaders and supporters during Menem's government, and argue that this was the result of two factors related to its lack of authoritarian inheritance: the party's electoral weakness, which made defecting from it a rational decision, and the absence of a strong source of party cohesion.

## A History of Elite-Military Collaboration

It is not possible to appreciate the significance of the rise of the UCEDE without understanding the long history of collaboration between elites and the military in Argentina. The roots of this history can be traced back to the 1910s, when the country made a precocious transition to democracy. Previously, Argentina had been under a stable form of civilian rule that, while holding regular elections, was nevertheless “profoundly undemocratic” (Remmer 1984: 30). Established in 1880, this regime is described by scholars as the “conservative order” (Botana 1977) or the “oligarchic regime” (Gibson 1996: 45-48).<sup>7</sup> As such labels suggest, this regime was tightly controlled by “an exclusive circle of aristocrats” that “simultaneously held the keys to economic, social, and political power” (Smith 1978: 9). Economically, the regime was geared toward the export of agricultural products, which led to sustained growth and transformed Argentina into one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Politically, it was an example of what would today be called “electoral authoritarianism” (Schedler 2006). The vehicle that incumbents used to contest elections was called the National Autonomist Party (PAN). As Gibson (1996: 46) explains: “[The PAN] functioned as the official party and integrated the landholding elites of Buenos Aires with provincial elites from the interior. While officially a party, PAN was in reality the political manifestation of the structure of state power forged between the presidency and the governorships.” Although elections were regularly held, suffrage restrictions and blatant fraud meant that they were not truly competitive.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, according to Remmer (1984: 30),

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<sup>7</sup> On the oligarchic regime, see Botana (1977), Smith (1978: 9-10), Remmer (1984: 27-33, 87-93), McGuire (1995a: 203-206), Gibson (1996: 45-48) and Borón (2000: 150-151, 155-156).

<sup>8</sup> See Smith (1978: 9), Remmer (1984: 30, 90-91) and Gibson (1996: 48).

“[e]lections were so meaningless that opposition candidates rarely appeared. PAN had little need even to bribe voters; they were almost irrelevant.”

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the oligarchic regime began to come under stress with the emergence of a new opposition party called the Radical Civic Union (UCR), or simply the Radicals.<sup>9</sup> Led by representatives of the country’s growing middle class, the UCR openly “challenged the political supremacy of the landed elite” (Smith 1978: 10). Decrying the closed nature of the regime and the farcical character of elections, they demanded a voice in the political system. In pursuit of this goal, the founders of the UCR built “Argentina’s first mass political party” (McGuire 1995a: 206). Thus, the UCR “developed a strong sense of partisan identity that was reinforced by a panoply of symbols and myths,” and it “created a national organization with a committee structure reaching down to the precinct level” (Remmer 1984: 103-104). Although the Radicals did not advocate significant changes to the economic system, they did represent a serious threat in other respects, leading armed revolts in 1893 and 1905.<sup>10</sup> In 1912, the regime responded with an electoral reform that would dramatically transform Argentine politics. Known as the “Sáenz Peña Law,” after the president who authorized it, the law introduced the secret ballot and universal manhood suffrage into Argentina for the first time.<sup>11</sup> Confident of their ability to win in the context of competitive elections, and believing that democratization would help

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<sup>9</sup> On the emergence of the UCR, see Smith (1978: 10), Remmer (1984: 87-93) and McGuire (1995a: 205-206).

<sup>10</sup> See Smith (1978: 10). Moreover, the UCR dates its founding to an armed uprising against the regime by a group called the *Unión Cívica* in 1890 (Remmer 1984: 32-33).

<sup>11</sup> On the Sáenz Peña Law, see Remmer (1984: 91-92). See also Smith (1978: 10) and McGuire (1995a: 205-206).

to pacify the UCR and an increasingly militant labor movement, the promoters of the law inaugurated what was arguably Latin America's first transition to democracy.<sup>12</sup>

If the oligarchic backers of the outgoing regime believed that they could continue to win elections under democratic conditions,<sup>13</sup> they were sadly mistaken. In fact, if there was one aspect of elections after 1912 that stood out more than any other, it was "the utter inability of the Conservatives to cope with the realities of electoral politics" (Smith 1978: 21). In this respect, there is a parallel between the effects of the Sáenz Peña Law in Argentina and the democratizing electoral reforms introduced in Chile beginning in the 1950s.<sup>14</sup> In both countries, the introduction of free and fair elections and the move toward universal suffrage resulted in dramatic losses for conservative parties. In Argentina, however, the reforms were implemented more than four decades before the Chilean reforms, and the effect on conservative parties was even more devastating. Scholars have offered various explanations for the poor performance of Argentine conservative parties under democracy, including the absence of a large sedentary peasantry (Smith 1978; McGuire 1995a), regional divisions between pro-free-trade elites in Buenos Aires and protectionist elites in the country's interior (Gibson 1996) and the fact that incumbents of the oligarchic regime had never made a serious effort to convert the PAN into a mass party prior to the 1912 electoral

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<sup>12</sup> The Sáenz Peña Law did not introduce female suffrage, and thus the regime it inaugurated would not meet contemporary definitions of democracy (Paxton 2000). Argentina, however, was not unique in this respect, since many countries that are widely considered to be early democratizers failed to introduce female suffrage until well into the twentieth century (e.g., United Kingdom in 1928, France in 1944, Switzerland in 1971).

<sup>13</sup> See Remmer (1984: 92) and Gibson (1996: 38, 49).

<sup>14</sup> In McGuire's (1995a: 238) words: "In their impact on the conservative rural elite, the Chilean electoral reforms of the late 1950s are not without parallels to the Argentine reforms of 1912."

reform (Remmer 1984).<sup>15</sup> The result of these factors was that “conservative groups [failed] to create a successor to PAN to defend their interests at the national level” (Remmer 1984: 99). The PAN dissolved and was replaced by several smaller conservative parties,<sup>16</sup> which, even if they had not been in competition with one another, still could not muster anywhere near a majority of the vote.<sup>17</sup> In the 1916 election, the first held under the new electoral rules, the UCR swept,<sup>18</sup> and the party quickly established itself as the dominant force of Argentine politics. The exclusion of conservative parties from power, combined with the increasingly authoritarian behavior of UCR leader Hipólito Yrigoyen during his two terms as president (1916-1922 and 1928-1930), eventually led to the emergence of a coup coalition.<sup>19</sup> In September 1930, Yrigoyen was overthrown by the military, and a new period of authoritarian rule known as the “Infamous Decade” began. This new regime, which returned elites to the halls of power and depended on gross electoral fraud for its survival, was “in many ways a return to the pre-1916 status quo” (Gibson 1996: 59).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> As Remmer (1984: 30) explains: “PAN was not organized on a popular basis. Its leaders made little effort to recruit popular support.” She continues: “Not only did the leaders of PAN not bother to recruit popular support, but they never developed a set of beliefs or ideas that could be identified as a partisan perspective... PAN then was not a political party in the usual sense of the term. It had no distinctive partisan ideology or popular following, and it made no attempt to acquire either” (Remmer 1984: 31). Borón (2000: 155) concurs, writing: “The Partido Autonomista Nacional (National Autonomist Party, PAN)...was politically powerful and electorally unbeatable as long as male suffrage was not compulsory, voting was not secret, and free elections were only rare exceptions in a public panorama marked by electoral fraud and corruption. Once the 1912 electoral reform was implemented, the PAN’s extreme electoral weakness appeared in full force.”

<sup>16</sup> Examples include the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) and the Conservative Party. See Remmer (1984: 97-99) and Gibson (1996: 49-53).

<sup>17</sup> See Smith (1978: 21), Remmer (1984: 95-96) and Borón (2000: 151).

<sup>18</sup> See Remmer (1984: 95-96).

<sup>19</sup> On Yrigoyen’s conduct and the causes of the 1930 coup, see Smith (1978), McGuire (1995a: 207-208) and Gibson (1996: 53-58).

<sup>20</sup> On the “Infamous Decade,” see McGuire (1995a: 207-208) and Gibson (1996: 59-61).

The breakdown of Argentina's short-lived 1916-1930 democratic regime established a pattern of elite-military collaboration that would last for the next half-century. As Di Tella (1971-1972) argued in a pioneering essay, the decision of elites to turn to the military for assistance was powerfully conditioned by the lack of an electorally viable conservative party. According to Di Tella (1971-1972: 323), "constitutional safeguards are not enough to convince powerful economic groups of the convenience of operating within the democratic system: what is needed is a party of the right that is capable, if not of winning elections, of at least making a good showing and of maintaining the hope of winning in the future, or of influencing a center party so that, in practice, it defends its interests." The fact that Argentina lacked such a party, he argued, was "the Achilles' heel not only of the right, but of the country as a whole" (Di Tella 1971-1972: 323). To be sure, there were some significant conservative parties at the provincial level, such as the *Partido Demócrata* in Mendoza and the *Partido Autonomista* and *Partido Liberal* in Corrientes.<sup>21</sup> Some of these parties dated back to the pre-1916 period and were important actors in their provinces, dominating local politics and sending delegations to the federal Congress. On the national scene, however, they were marginal players and were incapable of adequately providing representation to economic elites of the kind described by Di Tella. Moreover, and crucially, in the pivotal Buenos Aires region, the demographic, political and economic center of the country, "there were no counterparts to the myriad conservative provincial parties of the interior... No conservative parties existed in either Buenos Aires province or the capital city of Buenos Aires that were capable, by virtue of their electoral strength, of playing a significant role in the political

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<sup>21</sup> On Argentina's provincial parties, see Mansilla (1983). For a complete list of these parties, see Gibson (1996: 71-74). For a discussion of the simultaneous existence of both national and subnational party systems in Argentina, see Gibson and Suarez-Cao (2010).

process” (Gibson 1996: 67). This meant that elites would be forced to pursue their interests through alternative, non-democratic means.

Between 1930 and the early 1980s, Argentine elites found political representation not through a conservative party but instead through what Borón (2000: 157) calls, with some irony, the “military party” (*partido militar*).<sup>22</sup> In 1930, 1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976, Argentina experienced conservative coups,<sup>23</sup> and was under direct military rule or some kind of military tutelage for most of the half-century between 1930 and 1983.<sup>24</sup> During this period, elites were often able to exercise a considerable degree of influence over national politics, particularly through the appointment of Buenos Aires-based “liberal” technocrats to key administrative and policymaking positions.<sup>25</sup> While in theory not politicians, many of these figures lived eminently political lives, angling for influence and facilitating connections between the military and economic elites. As Gibson (1996: 68) explains: “For a powerful regional [Buenos Aires] upper class divorced from any real representation in the party arena,

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<sup>22</sup> Gibson (1990: 17) makes the same argument, asserting: “In a country endowed with highly-developed parties of the working and middle classes, Argentina’s upper social strata have relied upon civil-military authoritarianism and corporatist pressure politics in the struggle for power.”

<sup>23</sup> There was also a successful coup in 1943, which led to three years of military rule. However, I do not consider the 1943 coup to be a “conservative” coup, since it put an end to the period of authoritarian rule known as the “Infamous Decade,” which, by all accounts, was strongly supported by Argentine elites.

<sup>24</sup> Between 1930 and 1943, Argentina was under a form of civil-military rule during the period known as the “Infamous Decade”; between 1943 and 1946, it was under direct military rule; between 1955 and 1958, it was again under direct military rule; between 1958 and 1966, the country was nominally democratic, but the biggest party (Peronism) was proscribed by the military and, moreover, a coup in 1962 toppled the elected president and replaced him with his vice president; between 1966 and 1973, it returned to direct military rule; and between 1976 and 1983, it was once again under direct military rule. The only exceptions to this rule of military dominance in Argentina were 1946-1955 and 1973-1976, when Peronist presidents were in power.

<sup>25</sup> In discussions of conservative political forces in Argentina during much of the twentieth century, it was common to distinguish between “federalists” and “liberals.” Although there was some ideological component to this distinction—in particular, “liberals” tended to be far more committed to the free market than “federalists”—they were terms of art used to denote the representatives of different regional interests. As Gibson (1996: 67) explains: “These were ideological labels [“liberal” and “federalist”], but they corresponded to the prevailing division between the interior and Buenos Aires.”



political representation resided in the liberal technocratic elite. It negotiated on behalf of its constituencies with the armed forces, staffed the highest economic policy-making institutions, and sought to reconcile the conflicting demands of different sectors of its social constituencies while in power... As a group of political leaders, the liberal technocratic elite were remarkably successful in capturing political power.” The result, for Argentine elites, was a curious situation that Borón (2000) describes as “ruling without a party.” In his words: “That, then, is the Argentine paradox: the persistent and structural weakness of the Right in the electoral arena, combined with the continuous ascendance—and increased weight—of the propertied classes within the state, the economy, and civil society” (Borón 2000: 141).

If during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Radicals were the political force from which Argentine elites sought military protection, during the second half of the century it was Peronism. The origins of Peronism can be traced to the 1940s, when Colonel Juan Domingo Perón participated in a 1943 coup that put an end to the “Infamous Decade.” The putschists were sympathetic to European fascism and, as such, one of their motives was to prevent Argentina from joining the Allied cause in World War II.<sup>26</sup> Perón became labor secretary in the resulting military government, a position from which he was able to build a base of support among the country’s large and growing working class.<sup>27</sup> As his popularity surged and his influence increased, he was briefly imprisoned by his military colleagues in 1945, before being released and launching a career in electoral politics. In 1946, Perón was

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<sup>26</sup> On the motives of the 1943 putschists, see Walter (1993). On Perón’s personal sympathies for fascism, see Waisman (1987: 244-245).

<sup>27</sup> As McGuire (1995a) explains: “After becoming labor secretary in September 1943, Perón worked for new social and labor legislation, improved enforcement of existing laws, supported workers during strikes, and helped rural workers organize. Because his reformism stood out against the military government’s initially anti-union policies, Perón could take personal credit for labor gains.”

elected president, and became one of the most polarizing figures in Argentine history. By extending a raft of unprecedented material and symbolic benefits, Perón won the passionate and enduring support of Argentina's popular sectors.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, the statist and redistributive aspects of his economic program—combined with a sense that the “barbarians” of Argentine lore had seized power<sup>29</sup>—provoked the intense opposition of economic elites, despite the fact that Perón was virulently anti-communist.<sup>30</sup> In 1955, Perón was overthrown in a coup; he was sent into exile, and Peronism was legally proscribed. Yet, despite attempts to erase it from Argentine society, Peronism survived as a potent political identity, especially in the country's labor unions, which became the “organizational backbone of the Peronist movement” (Munck 1998: 51). The division between Peronists and anti-Peronists would remain one of the major axes of Argentine politics for the next several decades.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> As McGuire (1997: 50) explains, there is little mystery as to why Perón became so popular among Argentina's popular sectors: “Workers came to support Perón...because he was plainly responsible for a large and sudden increase in the wealth, power, and status of the urban working class.” For a description of some of the material and symbolic benefits that they received during his government, see McGuire (1997: 52-54).

<sup>29</sup> See Ostiguy (2007).

<sup>30</sup> While Peronism was always difficult to define in left-right terms (Ostiguy 2009b), it nevertheless had a few core components that were at odds with the free-market commitments traditionally supported by Argentina's economic elites. According to Levitsky (2003: 28-29), these core commitments included: “(1) a state-led industrialization strategy that centered around the state's promotion, protection, and, in some cases, ownership of key industries; (2) Keynesian or demand-enhancement policies aimed at expanding the domestic market; and (3) a staunch commitment to bread-and-butter unionism, which included a defense of union wage demands, job protection, basic worker benefits, moderately redistributive social welfare policies, and the corporatist legal and organizational framework established during the first Perón government.” Interestingly, not all elite sectors were as hostile to Peronism as economic elites. Instead, many appear to have been drawn to Perón's promise to prevent a communist revolution by undertaking timely economic reforms in order to pacify the working class. As Waisman (1987: 173) explains: “Perón's diagnosis and proposed solutions received a mixed response among established elites. They were supported by the political and ideological elites in control of the state or close to it: the leadership of the army, and the church, a segment of the Conservative Party, and groups linked to these organizations. They were opposed by the economic elites, both agrarian and industrial...by a majority segment of the Conservatives, and by other groups linked to these organizations.” One consequence of this is that Perón was able to absorb “much of the Right's traditional mass base by recruiting into his movement local conservative leaders in the countryside and small towns” (Borón 2000: 158; also Gibson 1997). The upshot is that Peronism posed a dual and paradoxical challenge for economic elites: it represented a threat to their interests, while simultaneously undercutting their ability to organize and defend themselves electorally.

<sup>31</sup> See Ostiguy (2009b) and McGuire (1997: 80, 151).

In 1958, the military allowed “democratic” elections to be held. These were marred, however, by the fact that Peronism, the country’s most popular political force, remained illegal, creating an untenable situation that O’Donnell (1973) memorably described as “the impossible game.”<sup>32</sup> In 1966, the military returned to power, giving rise to Argentina’s first “bureaucratic authoritarian” (O’Donnell 1973) regime. Despite the military’s intention to remain in power for the long term and to make deep and lasting changes to Argentine politics, economy and society, it was forced to limit its ambitions after the explosion of mass protests in 1969.<sup>33</sup> This period also saw the rise of powerful new guerrilla groups, the most important of which were leftist Peronists called the Montoneros and a Marxist group called the Revolutionary Army of the People (ERP).<sup>34</sup> Encouraged by international events, particularly the Cuban Revolution, and responding to the closure of political space during military rule, they rapidly grew in size and began “a campaign of bombing, kidnapping, and murder, punctuated by attacks on property and seizures of police stations, military barracks, and small towns in the countryside” (McGuire 1997: 157-158). In 1973, the military decided to exit power and hold elections. Appearing to accept the basic idea behind Goodwin’s (2001) “no other way out” argument—namely, that closed and violent authoritarianism can

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<sup>32</sup> Munck (1998: 51) summarizes the concept of the “impossible game” as follows: “Inasmuch as an open competitive politics was allowed, the Peronists could count on winning—a move that would call forth a military coup, but inasmuch as the Peronists were proscribed from running in elections or were excluded from power as a result of military rule, the Peronist unions...could destabilize any government [they] faced... And if the anti-Peronists could maintain an electoral ban on the Peronists or resort to outright military intervention, to ensure that the Peronists would not take over the presidency, the Peronists were strong enough to make the country ungovernable. In this situation, which O’Donnell refers to as an ‘impossible game,’ each side could veto the other’s project but not advance their own.”

<sup>33</sup> Because these protests began in the city of Córdoba, the event became known as the *Cordobazo*. They quickly spread throughout the country, and helped to set in motion a gradual transition to democracy. See McGuire (1997: 157-158) and Lewis (2002: 14-16).

<sup>34</sup> For a detailed description of these guerrilla groups, see Lewis (2002).

actually encourage guerrilla formation rather than impede it—the military authorities hoped that the country’s descent into ever-greater polarization and radicalism could be defused by opening the political system.<sup>35</sup> Specifically, they would attempt to reincorporate Peronism into mainstream politics, which had been formally excluded since Perón was overthrown in a coup in 1955. Thus, elections were scheduled and the proscription against Peronism was lifted, though Perón himself would still be prohibited from running for office.<sup>36</sup>

In March 1973, the Peronist candidate Héctor Cámpora won the presidency by a wide margin in a free and fair election.<sup>37</sup> A left-leaning Peronist, Cámpora’s victory was greeted enthusiastically by the Montoneros, who referred to him as “Uncle” and regarded Perón himself as an “old Montonero.”<sup>38</sup> For a brief moment, it seemed possible that something similar to what was then occurring in Chile under Salvador Allende would be replicated in Argentina, and that the new president would make moves to create what the Montoneros called the “socialist fatherland.”<sup>39</sup> Upon his inauguration on 25 May 1973, “Cámpora declared an amnesty and released all the captured guerrillas,” and “the Montoneros pledged their support to the new Peronist government” (Lewis 2002: 51). Yet, there was a crucial difference between Cámpora’s government and other leftist governments examined in this study: the difference was that nobody believed Cámpora was his own man. Instead, it was understood that he was simply Perón’s temporary stand-in, a reality captured in unambiguous terms by the campaign slogan, “Cámpora to the presidency, Perón to

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<sup>35</sup> See Bermeo (2003: 183).

<sup>36</sup> See McGuire (1995a: 217).

<sup>37</sup> See Bermeo (2003: 177-178).

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Lewis (2002: 84).

<sup>39</sup> See Bermeo (2003: 184).

power.”<sup>40</sup> As such, the extent to which Cámpora’s government was perceived as a threat to economic elites would be strongly conditioned by the actions of Perón himself.

If in the past Perón had been ambiguous about whether he supported the Montoneros’ radicalism and use of violence,<sup>41</sup> he now clearly signaled his displeasure with Cámpora and condemned the Peronist left. On 13 July 1973, barely a month and a half after taking office, Cámpora was forced to resign under pressure from Perón. New elections were scheduled for September, and this time Perón himself was allowed to participate, with his wife, Isabel, serving as his running mate. After winning the presidency by a landslide,<sup>42</sup> Perón banned the Marxist ERP, aggressively lambasted the Montoneros in public and introduced “hard-line anti-terrorist legislation” aimed at the guerrilla groups (Bermeo 2003: 188).<sup>43</sup> His government also oversaw the creation of a right-wing paramilitary group called the Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance, or “Triple A,” which “publish[ed] death lists, threaten[ed] labor activists, and even eliminate[ed] the regime’s left-wing opponents” (Bermeo 2003: 188).<sup>44</sup> After Perón’s death in July 1974, he was replaced by his wife, Isabel, who intensified repression against the Peronist and non-Peronist left. In addition to

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted in McGuire (1997: 163).

<sup>41</sup> See McGuire (1997: 161).

<sup>42</sup> In September 1973, Perón was elected with a whopping 61.9 percent of the vote, considerably more than the 49.5 percent won by Cámpora in March 1973 (Lewis 2002: 90, 80). This suggests that it was not just the Peronist base that voted for Perón, but a much larger swath of the electorate. According to McGuire (1997: 151), many of those who voted for him appear to have done so on the belief that he was the only one who could save the country from disintegration. As a result, “conservatives who had come to fear revolution more than Peronist restoration acquiesced to, and even voted for, Perón’s reelection as president in 1973, hoping that he could tame new guerrilla groups—including the Peronist Montoneros” (McGuire 1997: 151).

<sup>43</sup> See also Munck (1998: 52).

<sup>44</sup> As Bermeo (2003: 188) explains: “Perón was not a founder of the organization and it was not officially sponsored by the state, but it emerged during his presidency (on 21 November 1973) and was the brainchild of [José] López Rega, an ultra-right figure who had once been Perón’s secretary and was then (ironically) minister of social welfare.” See also Munck (1998: 53) and Lewis (2002: 90-91).

presiding over continued “death squad” killings by the Triple A, she signed a decree in February 1975 empowering the military to employ whatever means it deemed necessary to “neutralize or annihilate”<sup>45</sup> guerrillas in the province of Tucumán, where the ERP was attempting to launch a full-scale revolutionary war.<sup>46</sup> Despite state-sanctioned repression, the country’s guerrilla groups remained a powerful force, carrying out bombings, kidnappings, robberies and murder on a large scale.<sup>47</sup> In the face of guerrilla, paramilitary and military violence, as well as increasingly militant labor activity and hyperinflation,<sup>48</sup> the hapless government of Isabel Perón—who had virtually no relevant experience when she became president—seemed incapable of stemming Argentina’s descent into anarchy.

On 24 March 1976, the government of Isabel Perón was overthrown in a coup and replaced by a military junta. The resulting military regime, which called itself the *Proceso de Reorganización Nacional* (Process of National Reorganization), or simply “the Proceso,” would last for seven years and have an enduring impact on the prospects of conservative party-building in Argentina. Described as “bureaucratic authoritarian” (O’Donnell 1978, 1979) or

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Lewis (2002: 105). In September and October 1975, more decrees were signed that extended the military’s authority “to ‘annihilate the activities of subversive elements’ to...the entire national territory, not just Tucumán Province, and placed at their disposal all police and penal institutions to carry out this task” (Lewis 2002: 119). These decrees essentially gave the armed forces “a blank check” (Lewis 2002: 120).

<sup>46</sup> As Lewis (2002: 98-99) explains, Tucumán seemed like the ideal setting to make the transition from terrorism to full-scale revolutionary war: “It was time to go beyond urban guerrilla terrorism, which by itself would never accomplish the overthrow of the old society, and initiate a higher phase of the struggle, the actual conquest of ‘liberated zones’ in which it would be possible to create a true army of the revolution. Eventually, the revolutionary army would confront the counterrevolutionary army in regular battles. Tucumán, with its dense, impoverished population, its thick jungles, and the Andean mountain chain running its length, seemed...to offer an impregnable base for launching the revolution.”

<sup>47</sup> Citing the work of María José Moyano, McGuire (1997: 158) provides the following estimates of guerrilla activities: “According to Moyano’s content analysis of Buenos Aires newspapers, the guerrillas carried out 85 kidnappings and 129 murders between January 1969 and the end of the military regime in May 1973; 140 kidnappings and 481 murders between June 1973 and the end of the elected Peronist government in March 1976; and 14 kidnappings and 310 murders between March 1976 and December 1979.”

<sup>48</sup> On hyperinflation, which hit 335 percent in 1975, and labor activity, see Munck (1998: 53).

“neoconservative” (Schamis 1991), this regime bore a strong resemblance to the one installed in Chile in 1973.<sup>49</sup> First, like the Chilean regime, the Proceso unleashed a wave of extraordinary violence against “subversives” and their suspected sympathizers.<sup>50</sup> The military governor of the Province of Buenos Aires bluntly summarized the regime’s plans as follows: “First we will kill all the subversives; then we will kill all their collaborators; then their sympathizers; then those who remained indifferent; and finally we’ll kill the undecided.”<sup>51</sup> Estimates of the number of people killed or “disappeared” during the seven years of military rule range from 9,000 to 30,000.<sup>52</sup> Second, like the Chilean regime, the Proceso attempted to implement far-reaching neoliberal reforms. The man entrusted with this task was José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz, “a prominent member of the liberal technocracy descended from an economically and politically influential family” (Gibson 1996: 80-81). As economy minister from 1976 to 1981, he attempted to dismantle many of the statist features of the economy, cutting tariffs, laying off public-sector workers and attempting to weaken organized labor through various means.<sup>53</sup> Finally, like the Chilean regime, the Proceso seems to have enjoyed—initially, at least—significant popular support. Bermeo (2003: 193) writes

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<sup>49</sup> On the similarities between these two military regimes, see Schamis (1991).

<sup>50</sup> For a detailed description of state repression during the Proceso, see Feitlowitz (1998).

<sup>51</sup> General Ibérico Saint-Jean, quoted in Lewis (2002: 143).

<sup>52</sup> The lower figure is from the National Commission on Disappeared Persons (CONADEP), which investigated the matter after the transition to democracy and published its findings in a report known as *Nunca Más* (Never Again). The higher figure comes from human rights groups. See Lewis (2002: 202-206).

<sup>53</sup> For descriptions of these reforms, see Schamis (1991: 208-211), Munck (1998: 65-69) and Lewis (2002: 163-165). Martínez de Hoz was much less successful in carrying out his program in the area of privatizations. As Lewis (2002: 164) discusses, attempts to privatize state-owned firms were blocked by sectors of the military that considered them crucial for national security: “[Military hardliners] were quite successful in blocking Martínez de Hoz’s liberalizing reforms. Military-run industries were not subject to privatization, nor were state industries like oil, coal, steel, electricity, gas, telephone, telegraph, water, hydroelectric power, airlines, railroads, subways, ports, or the merchant fleet, which were said to have military significance... Meanwhile, the military added other large private firms, like the Swiss-owned Compañía Italo-Argentina de Electricidad, to the state sector.”

that “the coup was greeted with relief and resignation rather than resistance,” and Lewis (2002: 1) asserts that the new military government had initially “been popular with the great majority of Argentines, having led a coup to oust a corrupt government floundering in economic chaos and guerrilla terrorism.”<sup>54</sup> Elite support was especially strong, with provincial conservative parties publicly describing themselves as “friends of the Proceso,”<sup>55</sup> and liberal technocrats such as Martínez de Hoz, who had strong links to Buenos Aires-based economic elites, angling for positions in the new regime.<sup>56</sup>

The Argentine and Chilean regimes parted company in dramatic fashion, however, with respect to the conditions under which they ended. As described in Chapters 3 and 4, the Chilean dictatorship ended largely on its own terms and could claim some significant accomplishments, particularly with respect to the economy. While the Chilean regime had seemed close to collapsing in 1982-1983 in the midst of economic catastrophe and mass protests, it managed to ride out the crisis and end on a “high note” in 1988-1990.<sup>57</sup> The Argentine transition was very different. As will be discussed in the next section, the Proceso ended after Argentina’s defeat in the 1983 Falklands/Malvinas War. Already reeling from a severe economic crisis, the military regime was badly discredited by this humiliating defeat and opted to extricate itself from politics as quickly as possible. With elections looming, “it was clear to all observers that the ‘military option’ for Argentine conservatism...would not

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<sup>54</sup> The coup was also initially supported by much of the UCR, which would later lead the country’s transition to democracy in 1983. The long-time Radical leader, Ricardo Balbín, had urged the military to carry out a “legalist coup” against Isabel Perón, and “most of the Radical Party, including the winning presidential candidate in 1999, Fernando De la Rúa, supported Videla’s coup in 1976” (Lewis 2002: 124, 243).

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Gibson (1996: 83).

<sup>56</sup> See Gibson (1996: 80-81).

<sup>57</sup> Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 91) cite Chile as an example of authoritarian regime “withdrawal in good times.”



be available in the foreseeable future... Faced with the imminence of a new democratic order, Argentine conservatism had no choice but to set its sights on building a presence in political society” (Gibson 1996: 101). In other words, no longer able to depend on the “military party” that had represented them during much of the twentieth century, elites would now have to build a conservative party. In their effort to build such a party, however, they would not have access to authoritarian inheritance like Chile’s UDI, since, as discussed in the next section, no conservative authoritarian successor party would emerge in Argentina.

### Why No “Argentine UDI”?

In this study, I argue that the primary determinant of success or failure among new conservative parties in Latin America is authoritarian inheritance. This factor, I assert, explains why the most successful new conservative parties were also authoritarian successor parties, as in the case of Chile’s UDI. Given the parallels between the Chilean (1973-1990) and Argentine (1976-1983) military regimes, an obvious question arises: why didn’t a conservative authoritarian successor party emerge in Argentina? In other words, why no “Argentine UDI”? This absence is especially puzzling, given that, as discussed below, Argentina’s military authorities were explicitly committed to the formation of such a party. In this section, I argue that no authoritarian successor party emerged in Argentina because of two of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: performance of the authoritarian regime, and level of threat prior to the onset of military rule. First, I argue that because of the disastrous performance of the Argentine dictatorship, it was not a viable platform for authoritarian successor party formation. In contrast to Chile, where an authoritarian

successor party could be expected to be born with both authoritarian baggage and authoritarian inheritance, an authoritarian successor party in Argentina would have had only baggage. Second, I argue that the poor performance of the regime was partially the result of a lower level of threat in Argentina prior to the 1976 coup. Specifically, I argue that because the country's main threats stemmed from guerrilla violence and general disorder, these could be solved relatively easily through repression and the installation of a minimally effective government. Once these tasks had been accomplished, the sense of threat declined, which led to erratic policymaking, divisions in the armed forces and the defection of key actors from the authoritarian coalition. In an effort to bolster the regime, Argentina's military authorities launched a disastrous invasion of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands.

One of the reasons the non-formation of an authoritarian successor party in Argentina is so striking is that the military authorities were explicitly committed to the formation of such a party. This aspect of the "Proceso" is not widely known. Many scholars, for legitimate reasons, focus on the regime's extraordinary violence against suspected "subversives," and its precipitous collapse after Argentina's war with Great Britain in 1982. What is less known is that in the late 1970s, the regime began to move from a purely "defensive" project based on the supposed "war against subversion," to a more "offensive" project based on the construction of new political institutions designed to preserve the regime's legacy after an eventual transition to democracy.<sup>58</sup> A key part of this project, as explained in a 1979 official document called the Political Bases of the Process of National Reorganization, was a proposal to create an "official" political party called the

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<sup>58</sup> For a discussion of this shift, and particularly the role that an official party was meant to play, see McGuire (1995b: 184-187; 1997: 172-178), Gibson (1996: 85-95) and Munck (1998: 97, 121, 239). Nevertheless, the specifics of the proposed post-transition order in Argentina were somewhat vague, unlike in Chile, where the regime's 1980 constitution provided detailed plans for a future political system (Munck 1998: 97-98, 173-174).

Movement of National Opinion (MON). The MON was meant to “embody the military’s permanent political legacy” (Munck 1998: 97), and would “bequeath the ‘inheritance of the Proceso’ to a new mass conservative party” (Gibson 1996: 77). Initially, the military authorities planned to build the MON on the backs of the provincial conservative parties, which had enthusiastically supported the regime and publicly described themselves as “friends of the Proceso.”<sup>59</sup> Later, they also considered reaching out to right-leaning Peronists and Radicals to build the party.<sup>60</sup> The military authorities intended for the MON to play a key role in “a carefully choreographed transition: starting as buttress of the regime, moving on to full partnership in government, and maturing, at some distant point in the future, into full-fledged party status” (Gibson 1996: 88-89). The MON, had it actually formed and survived democratization, would not have been perfectly analogous to Chile’s UDI, since it would have begun its life as the official party of an authoritarian regime rather than as an “inside-out” party. Nevertheless, if plans for the MON had been realized, the result would have been a “carefully groomed successor party” (McGuire 1997: 178), which might have led to a very different transition to democracy than the one that ultimately occurred. As McGuire (1997: 172) argues: “Had the MON scheme come to fruition, Argentina’s transition would have resembled the military-controlled ones in Brazil and Chile, both of which gave rise to civilian regimes constrained by military tutelage.”

Why, then, did no authoritarian successor party emerge in Argentina, either in the form of the MON or in the form of an “inside-out” party like the UDI? The most direct reason was the abysmal performance of the military regime in two key policy areas: the

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<sup>59</sup> See Gibson (1996: 83, 86-92).

<sup>60</sup> See Gibson (1996: 93-94).

economy and national defense. Like Chile under Pinochet, the leaders of the Proceso in Argentina attempted to carry out free-market reforms, which they hoped would establish the bases for long-term economic stability and prosperity, and also help to combat “subversion,” which they believed was rooted in the country’s statist economic model.<sup>61</sup> These reforms were applied haphazardly and inconsistently,<sup>62</sup> however, and they did not result in the sorts of economic gains associated with the Chilean dictatorship. In their study of the political economy of democratic transitions, Haggard and Kaufman (1995) collected data on the economic performances of several authoritarian regimes prior to democratization. In Argentina, a case of what they call a “crisis” transition, average annual growth for the last five full years of authoritarian rule was -1.5 percent and average annual inflation was 141.0 percent.<sup>63</sup> In Chile, in contrast, a case of what they call a “non-crisis” transition, average annual growth for the last five full years of authoritarian rule was 6.2 percent and average annual inflation was 20.4 percent.<sup>64</sup> In short, in Chile, the economy grew and inflation was low; in Argentina, the economy contracted and inflation was high. As such, an authoritarian successor party in Chile could draw on a record of economic success, while in Argentina, such a party, had it formed, would have been burdened with a record of economic failure.

The second, and even more important, policy area in which the Argentine dictatorship performed poorly was national defense. On 2 April 1982, against the backdrop of economic crisis and rising levels of protest against the regime, Argentina’s military

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<sup>61</sup> See Schamis (1991: 210-211; 1999: 258).

<sup>62</sup> See Frieden (1991: 178), Schamis (1999: 261) and Lewis (2002: 164).

<sup>63</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 175).

<sup>64</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 176).

authorities launched an invasion of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands,<sup>65</sup> which had been under British control since 1833 but which Argentina had long claimed as part of its national territory.<sup>66</sup> The main motive for the invasion seems to have been to drum up popular support by appealing to a nationalist cause supported by virtually all Argentines, and it initially succeeded in this respect. As Lewis (2002: 191) recounts: “When the invasion was announced, Argentines who had been demonstrating against the regime only a few days before poured out into the streets on 2 April [1982] to shout their approval.... [President] Galtieri even got a cable from the Montoneros in Havana, asking permission to return home and join the fight for the Malvinas.” While the invasion was clearly a reckless move in retrospect, Argentina’s rulers calculated that the British would not respond militarily, and that the United States would back Argentina if there were a war.<sup>67</sup> Both of these calculations were incorrect, and on 14 June 1982, after two and a half months of fighting, Argentina surrendered to British forces. The political fallout of this military defeat was immediate, with the president and all cabinet ministers resigning, and the navy and air force withdrawing their support for the military regime.<sup>68</sup> This triggered a transition to democracy: “[The] profound disarray within the armed forces was such that they considered the Proceso to be essentially over. The only thing they could agree on was to start a process of transition immediately... A political crisis had given way to a transition” (Munck 1998: 138). Strictly

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<sup>65</sup> For a discussion of the Falklands/Malvinas War, see Munck (1998: 136-146) and Lewis (2002: 190-192).

<sup>66</sup> The Argentine navy had long had dreams of invading the Falkland/Malvinas Islands, and had been drawing up serious plans since 1977 (Munck 1998: 139-140). The invasion was only launched in 1982, however, after an explosion of popular discontent against the regime, and appears to have been an opportunistic attempt by President Galtieri to build up support for both the regime and himself (Munck 1998: 140-141).

<sup>67</sup> See McGuire (1997: 178) and Munck (1998: 142).

<sup>68</sup> See Munck (1998: 138).

speaking, this was not a transition by “collapse,” since the regime survived for another seventeen months after the war ended.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, military defeat was clearly the catalyst of democratization, and by all accounts, Argentina’s military rulers exercised relatively little control over the transition.<sup>70</sup> This was in stark contrast to Chile, where the dictatorship ended not in the context of economic crisis and military defeat, but instead after a plebiscite outlined in its own 1980 constitution and in the midst of an economic boom.

The Argentine dictatorship’s terrible performance on the economy and national defense meant that it was not a viable platform for the construction of an authoritarian successor party. This sets it apart from Chile, and explains why no “Argentine UDI” formed. In Chile, a party claiming to represent the legacy of the military regime would have to wrestle with the authoritarian baggage of massive human rights violations, but would also benefit from authoritarian inheritance stemming from the regime’s relatively successful performance in other areas, particularly the economy. In Argentina, in contrast, a party claiming to represent the legacy of the military regime would have had to wrestle with the authoritarian baggage of massive human rights violations, but would *not* have benefited from any offsetting authoritarian inheritance. Leaving power “humiliated, defeated, and divided,” Argentina’s outgoing authoritarian incumbents “were not seen as a reliable or competent ally by any major section of Argentine civil or political society” (Linz and Stepan 1996: 205, 191). This meant that, far from wanting to associate with the old regime in order to tap into a ready-made base of supporters, conservative party-builders were well-advised to distance themselves from it as much as possible. The “kiss of death” of being associated with the

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<sup>69</sup> See McGuire (1995b: 192-193).

<sup>70</sup> See Karl (1990) and Linz and Stepan (1996: 192-193).

military regime was illustrated in the lead-up to the 1983 “founding election,” when the outgoing military authorities seem to have entered into secret talks with a faction of Peronist union leaders about the possibility of a pact.<sup>71</sup> Based on the assumption that the Peronists would win the upcoming election, the military appear to have offered their Peronist interlocutors control of unions then under government control in exchange for immunity from prosecution under a future Peronist government.<sup>72</sup> As soon as rumors of a possible deal surfaced, the UCR candidate Raúl Alfonsín denounced this “military-union pact,” casting “the Peronists as representatives of a past that included the outgoing military rulers and Alfonsín and the UCR as representatives of the future and the real opponents of military rule” (Munck 1998: 155).<sup>73</sup> This appears to have played a significant role in the Peronists’ defeat in the 1983 election—the first time they had lost a free and fair election since 1946.<sup>74</sup> The upshot is that if the Peronists, who had actually suffered under military rule, could lose an election because of a partial, late and rumored pact with the military, then the possibility of running openly as the “inheritors of the Proceso” was simply unthinkable.

The poor performance of Argentina’s military regime offers a convincing explanation of the non-formation of an authoritarian successor party, but it simultaneously raises other questions. Why were the Argentine military authorities not able to “ride out”

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<sup>71</sup> For a discussion of this “military-union pact,” see McGuire (1995b) and Munck (1998: 149-159).

<sup>72</sup> See McGuire (1995b: 181) and Munck (1998: 151-153).

<sup>73</sup> This meant that while the incumbents of the outgoing regime were not formally represented in the 1983 election, the Peronists—probably unfairly—were, in the eyes of much of the electorate, essentially cast as stand-ins for the military. As Munck (1998: 154-155) explains: “What was actually happening [in the 1983 election] was somewhat akin to the usual pattern of polarization between electoral forces supporting pro-regime candidates and antiauthoritarian candidates that characterizes ‘foundational elections’ in democratic transitions... The peculiarity of the Argentine case was that because the military had failed to generate a pro-military political force, there was no officialist candidate and the division between the old regime and the antiauthoritarian candidates was cast on the two main parties that had jointly opposed military rule.”

<sup>74</sup> See McGuire (1995b: 191) and Munck (1998: 149, 156).

the 1982 economic crisis like their Chilean counterparts,<sup>75</sup> and why did they choose to launch such a reckless war over the Falkland/Malvinas Islands? In answering these questions, it is useful to turn to another of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: the level of threat prior to the onset of military rule. Based on the operationalization of threat that I discuss in Chapter 2, Chile in 1973 would be scored as having a higher level of threat than Argentina in 1976, since only in the former did a government of the radical left actually take office.<sup>76</sup> This is not to discount the serious threat Argentina faced;<sup>77</sup> instead, it is to fully appreciate the extraordinary trauma of the Allende experience on many Chileans, particularly elites.

Although this scoring of threat in the two countries is potentially controversial, it is not original. On the contrary, it is the assessment of some of the most astute observers of Argentine and Chilean politics.<sup>78</sup> For example, in one of the most important studies of Argentina's 1976-1983 military regime, Munck (1998: 171) writes:<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> If the Chilean dictatorship had collapsed during the 1982 debt crisis rather than at the end of the decade in the midst of an economic boom, Pinochet and his entourage would almost certainly not be remembered today, as they are by many, as competent stewards of the economy. If this had occurred, the "brand" of the regime would have been severely tarnished, and the UDI would probably not have enjoyed as much success as it ultimately did.

<sup>76</sup> A partial exception was the month-and-a-half-long government of Héctor Cámpora, a left-leaning Peronist friendly toward the Montoneros, in 1973. Yet, as argued in the previous section, the fact that Cámpora was clearly a stand-in for Perón—and that Perón made his opposition to the left (Peronist and non-Peronist alike), abundantly clear—made this case different from, for example, that of Allende in Chile. For this reason, I do not score Argentina as a case where the radical left came to power before the onset of authoritarian rule.

<sup>77</sup> As described in the previous section, the guerrillas carried out a campaign of robberies, bombings, assassinations and generalized terror that severely affected the quality of life of many Argentines. As McGuire (1997: 158) puts it: "The people who were the guerrillas' main targets—police and military officers, union leaders, and executives of big corporations—turned their houses into fortresses, took a different route to work every day, and lived in perpetual fear that they or their family members might be kidnapped or killed."

<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Frieden (1991); Linz and Stepan (1996: 224-225); Munck (1998: 171, 273); and Silva (1999: 174).

<sup>79</sup> For a thoughtful discussion of different ways to measure levels of "threat," and a defense of his decision to score Chile in 1973 as having a higher degree of threat than Argentina in 1976, see Munck (1998: 273, n. 3).



Chile's experience with bureaucratic authoritarianism began with the September 1973 military coup that displaced the democratically elected government of President Salvador Allende. If, as in Argentina, the military that staged the coup were responding to what they saw as a grave threat, associated in this case with the Marxist agenda of Allende and the Popular Unity (Unidad Popular), the coalition of leftist political parties that backed Allende, in the Chilean case the threat was actually greater and the perceived malleability of the actors the military were reacting against was lower than in the case of Argentina.

In a similar vein, Linz and Stepan (1996: 224-225) note the different types of threat in Chile and Argentina, and hint at how these might have had long-term political impacts:

The breakdown of democracy and the repressive rule of the military probably left a different legacy in Chile than in Argentina... In Chile an important segment of the society felt deeply threatened by the Unidad Popular government and the parties linked with it. These groups supported Pinochet and continued doing so in the plebiscite, and many of them continue to support the parties of the right and the continuance of military prerogatives. In Argentina, citizens felt threatened not so much by a government or by a party or parties, but by the breakdown of government and the political violence of the guerrilla-terrorists and the state-terrorists. However, there is no salient and weighty presence in Argentina in 1995 of the actors of the drama that led to the tragic years of military rule... In contrast, in Chile, part of the right still believes that some leftist parties are a potential threat and should be banned.

As these and other quotes suggest,<sup>80</sup> the threat posed by the Allende government in Chile was unusually intense, both because of the socializing policies he enacted while in office, and because the forces that had carried him to the presidency—mass-based political parties with deep roots in society—could not be easily eradicated.<sup>81</sup> In contrast, the threat in Argentina,

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<sup>80</sup> The idea of a more intense threat in Chile prior to the onset of military rule than in neighboring countries is also supported by scholars of Chilean politics. As Silva (1999: 174) explains: "In contrast to those other southern cone countries, the threat in Chile came not only from certain groups of the population, but also from the government itself, which explicitly attempted to change the existing sociopolitical and economic order. Furthermore, the threat to the economic elites was not merely the product of fear of possible damage to their interests; this had already occurred as a result of the expropriation of land, companies and banks. It was their very survival as a class and the existence of capitalism as a system that was at stake."

<sup>81</sup> As Munck (1998: 273, n. 3) puts it: "It is also worth stressing that the actor seeking change in Chile was more rooted in society and broadly based, and hence less malleable from the perspective of the military rulers, than the actors seeking change in Argentina and Uruguay."

as serious as it was, came primarily from guerrilla groups with little popular support<sup>82</sup> and a breakdown of law and order during the government of Isabel Perón. These problems could be “solved” by exterminating several thousand suspected guerrillas and by installing a minimally effective government; Chile’s problems, in contrast, were more intractable.<sup>83</sup>

The lower level of threat in Argentina prior to the onset of military rule contributed to the regime’s poor performance in two ways. First, it contributed to divisions in the armed forces. In the immediate aftermath of the 1976 coup, Argentina’s military “acted in a cohesive manner, seeking to control an opposition force that was perceived as being quite strong with a large dose of repression” (Munck 1998: xxvii). This repression was effective, and the country’s guerrillas were rapidly decimated.<sup>84</sup> This very “success,” however, dissolved the glue holding together factions of the armed forces: “[M]ilitary cohesion began to break down. The deepening economic crisis contributed to this erosion, but even more important was the ‘success’ of the dirty war itself. By late 1977, the guerrilla groups had been defeated... Without a war climate to submerge them, personal disputes, interservice rivalries, differences over economic policy, and conflicting views about how to structure a future civilian regime bubbled to the surface” (McGuire 1997: 175).<sup>85</sup> This was in stark contrast to Chile, where memories of the Allende experience—and fear that the same

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<sup>82</sup> On the low levels of popular support for the guerrillas in Argentina, see Bermeo (2003: 177-220).

<sup>83</sup> To be sure, there also existed a partisan threat in Argentina in the form of Peronism. However, as O’Donnell (1978: 7) explains, Peronism was never as threatening to Argentine elites as the Socialist and Communist parties in Chile, given its “explicitly anti-Marxist orientation” and its “favoring [of] class integration and national capitalism.” Frieden (1991: 206) concurs, writing that prior to the 1976 coup, “Argentine positions were not so polarized as in Chile, partly because Peronism was never anticapitalist.”

<sup>84</sup> See McGuire (1997: 175) and Munck (1998: 177).

<sup>85</sup> These divisions are typically described in terms of what O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) call “softliners” and “hardliners.” For a detailed analysis of these divisions in Argentina, see Munck (1998).

political forces could easily return to power if the regime let down its guard—assured a high degree of unity among the armed forces throughout the dictatorship. Second, the lower level of threat contributed to defections from the authoritarian coalition, particularly by business elites. As in Chile after the 1973 coup, during the early years of Argentina's Proceso, “[t]he armed forces and business clearly shared a complementary interest” (Munck 1998: 67), and “powerful private-sector groups supported the military’s restoration of order” (Frieden 1991: 210). Business support for the military regime largely evaporated, however, once the guerrilla threat had been eliminated, setting Argentina apart from Chile: “Unlike in Chile...in Argentina businessmen protested government policy, their complaints untempered by lingering concern over threats to private property” (Frieden 1991: 208).<sup>86</sup> These divisions among military factions, and disagreements between business and regime incumbents, led to erratic and ineffective economic policymaking, which contributed to the regime’s poor economic performance.<sup>87</sup> Most importantly, it encouraged the military authorities to make the risky move of invading the Falkland/Malvinas Islands in an attempt to bolster support among both the armed forces and Argentine society.<sup>88</sup> Without an

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<sup>86</sup> On the defection of Argentine business from the authoritarian coalition, see Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 57-60) and Frieden (1991: 206-215, 224-227).

<sup>87</sup> Economic policy during the Proceso was erratic, fishtailing between attempts to impose neoliberal reforms and attempts to return to more statist economic policies. Moreover, even when the regime did support neoliberal reforms, these were only partial, with very few privatizations undertaken (Lewis 2002: 164). As a result, Argentina’s military regime launched only a “truncated liberalization experiment” (Schamis 1999: 261). According to Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 59), this erratic style of economic policymaking was rooted in divisions within the armed forces: “[In] Argentina, increasingly erratic policy behavior reflected division and uncertainty among military and political elites. In Argentina, the Viola administration promised a sharp turn away from the neoliberal policies pursued under [former President Jorge] Videla... Viola himself was replaced by a coup d’état that brought a far more orthodox team back to power at the end of 1981.”

<sup>88</sup> As Munck (1998: 142) explains: “While the transition to democracy was triggered...as a result of military defeat by a foreign power, the deeper causes must be sought in the internal or domestic problems that pushed the military to make a gamble they had no realistic chance of winning.” According to O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 18), such risky wars are often launched because of domestic problems faced by authoritarian regimes: “Even if one seizes upon the impact of military fiascos such as the Malvinas/Falklands for Argentina and

enduring threat to hold the authoritarian coalition together, as existed in Chile throughout the dictatorship, Argentina's rulers were compelled to try and prop up the regime through this desperate and ultimately disastrous military gambit. Thus, while the military regime's poor performance was clearly the proximate cause of authoritarian successor party non-formation, the regime's poor performance can itself be traced, at least in part, to the lower level of threat in Argentina than in Chile prior to the onset of military rule.

To summarize, in this section I examined why no "Argentine UDI" emerged, and argued that it could be explained in terms of two of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: performance of the authoritarian regime, and level of threat prior to the onset of military rule. Because the Argentine military regime was not only extremely violent but also an utter failure in terms of governance, it did not constitute a viable platform for the construction of an authoritarian successor party. The only partial exceptions were found at the subnational level, where a number of former governors from the Proceso created parties and were returned to office in free and fair elections after the transition to democracy. Examples include *Acción Chaqueña* in the province of Chaco, the party of Colonel José Ruiz Palacios; *Partido Renovador de Salta* in the province of Salta, the party of Captain Roberto Ulloa; and, most famously, *Fuerza Republicana* in the province of Tucumán, the party of General Antonio Domingo Bussi.<sup>89</sup> Another partial exception is the National Movement of

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Cyprus for Greece, it is more accurate to interpret them as the result of an already tottering and stalemated regime launching a *fuite en avant* rather than as the cause for the regime's having reached such an impasse."

<sup>89</sup> Roberto Ulloa was the military-appointed governor of Salta from 1976 until shortly before the transition to democracy in 1983; in 1991, he was elected governor (Adrogué 1991: 429). José Ruiz Palacios served in the Proceso first as undersecretary of interior, and then as military-appointed governor of Chaco from 1981 until 1983; in 1989, he was elected mayor of the provincial capital, Resistencia, and in 1991, another candidate from *Acción Chaqueña* was elected governor (Adrogué 1991: 429-430). Antonio Domingo Bussi was the military-appointed governor of Tucumán from 1976 until 1977; in 1995, he was elected governor (Aibar 2005). For more on these parties, see López (1991), Adrogué (1993), Crenzel (1999, 2001), Aibar (2005) and Lewis (2002: 236-237, 247-248).

Dignity and Independence (MODIN), the party formed by Lieutenant Colonel Aldo Rico and his followers in 1990.<sup>90</sup> The success of all of these parties, however, was fleeting, and with the partial exception of MODIN, they were totally marginal players in national politics.<sup>91</sup> The upshot is that as Argentina made the transition to democracy, economic elites would have to go it alone. They would no longer be able to follow the time-honored tradition of “knocking on the barracks door,” and they also would not be able to work with incumbents of the outgoing regime in a joint party-building effort. Even if conservative party-builders had wanted the help of outgoing regime officials, those officials were in no position to do so; indeed, they could not even protect themselves from criminal prosecution.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, conservative party-builders did not *want* their help, given the sheer toxicity of the regime’s brand and because “the military by 1983 was no longer seen as a reliable ally or a credible umpire by the bourgeoisie” (Linz and Stepan 1996: 198). As a result, conservative party formation in Argentina, unlike in Chile, would not take the form of an authoritarian successor party; instead, the country’s most important new conservative

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<sup>90</sup> MODIN was created in 1990 by Lieutenant Colonel Aldo Rico, one of the main leaders of the “*carapintada*” (painted face) uprisings of junior officers in the late 1980s to protest human rights trials against former officials of the 1976-1983 military regime. While MODIN was led by soldiers of dubious democratic convictions, it probably would not qualify as an authoritarian successor party by the definition used in this study, since its leaders had not been high-ranking officials of the previous military regime. Finally, while MODIN was “right-wing” in a sense, emphasizing the issues of nationalism, the dignity of the armed forces and the Catholic faith, it did not have an upper-class core constituency and, as such, was not a conservative party. In fact, the main support for the party seems to have come from popular-sector voters disenchanted with the neoliberal orientation of Peronist President Carlos Menem. See Norden (1996a, 1996b) and Payne (2000: 51-100).

<sup>91</sup> MODIN performed relatively well in a handful of national elections in the 1990s, briefly becoming the third biggest party in the country. In the 1991 and 1993 Chamber of Deputies elections, it won 3.5 and 5.8 percent, respectively, and in the 1994 constituent assembly election, it won an impressive 9.2 percent (Payne 2000: 57). Thereafter, however, the party fell into terminal crisis, and had largely disappeared by the end of the decade.

<sup>92</sup> On the human rights trials against former military officials of the Proceso, see Sikkink (2011: 70-76).

party in the immediate aftermath of the transition to democracy would be the UCEDE, a party with relatively strong democratic credentials.

### The Rise of the UCEDE

In 1983, Argentina made the transition to democracy. Following the June 1982 defeat to the British in the Falklands/Malvinas War, the military authorities quickly announced plans to hold elections and return the country to civilian rule. Although the military's ambition had been to fundamentally reshape Argentine politics, it proved totally unsuccessful in this respect. As discussed above, the regime's plans to create an official party (MON) to defend the legacy of the Proceso failed, as did last-ditch efforts to forge a pact with the Peronists in order to retain some degree of control over the transition. The result of these failures was a process of democratization in which "the transition was basically dictated by the opposition" (Munck 1998: 160).<sup>93</sup> In its basic contours, the post-Proceso political system would be very similar to the pre-Proceso political system. As Gibson (1996: 99) puts it: "The political status quo seemed incontrovertibly on its way back. Seven years of harsh authoritarian rule and political engineering had accomplished nothing." Appropriately, the two main parties in Argentina's new democracy were the Peronists and the Radicals, the same two parties that had dominated Argentine politics for the past several decades. While the classic Peronists-anti-Peronist divide remained potent,<sup>94</sup> new issues also came to the fore. One was human rights and the legacy of the outgoing military regime. As

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<sup>93</sup> See also Linz and Stepan (1996: 193).

<sup>94</sup> On the enduring importance of the Peronist-anti-Peronist divide, see Ostiguy (2009b).

described in the previous section, it was largely by presenting himself as a champion of human rights—and by tarring the Peronists as a quasi-authoritarian political force willing to make deals with despised officials of the military regime—that the Radical candidate Raúl Alfonsín was able to win the October 1983 presidential election.<sup>95</sup> Another issue was the economy, with Alfonsín inheriting a hyperinflationary catastrophe from the outgoing dictatorship. In 1983, the last year of military rule, inflation hit 343.8 percent; in 1984 and 1985, the first two years of democracy, it rose to 626.7 and 672.1 percent, respectively.<sup>96</sup>

It was in this context of democratization and economic meltdown that the Union of the Democratic Center (UCEDE) was born in the latter half of 1982.<sup>97</sup> The idea for the new party was formally announced by its founder, Álvaro Alsogaray, on 21 June 1982—not coincidentally, exactly one week after Argentina's surrender in the Falklands/Malvinas War.<sup>98</sup> In the wake of this military defeat, Alsogaray stated what had become clear to virtually everyone: the Proceso was “exhausted,” and the military authorities would “have to search for a political exit within a short period of time.”<sup>99</sup> Alsogaray was a well-known public figure, having served in various governments since the 1950s. A prominent member of the liberal technocratic elite,<sup>100</sup> he was known as “the high priest of free-market economics in

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<sup>95</sup> Alfonsín won 50.3 percent, easily beating the Peronist candidate, Ítalo Lúder, who won only 39.0 percent (McGuire 1995a: 221, 242).

<sup>96</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 191).

<sup>97</sup> The UCEDE was established between June and August 1982. See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982.

<sup>98</sup> See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 2.

<sup>99</sup> See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 2.

<sup>100</sup> As discussed earlier, these liberal technocrats were defined both programmatically by their commitment to the free market, and geographically by their connection to Buenos Aires-based elites. See Gibson (1996: 66-69).

Argentina,”<sup>101</sup> “the godfather of post-Peronist *liberalismo*” (Gibson 1990: 189) and “the most important liberal reference point in recent decades” (Braun 1988: 26). The UCEDE was not Alsogaray’s first attempt at party-building. In 1956, he had created the Independent Civic Party, and in 1971 he had created New Force, though both performed poorly at the polls.<sup>102</sup> This time, though, the task of conservative party-building was especially urgent: the failure of military rule meant that conservatives would now truly have to go it alone, and the magnitude of the country’s economic crisis made it more crucial than ever that they influence public policy. The result was the UCEDE, “the most serious attempt Argentine capitalists have ever made to construct a modern conservative party” (Borón 2000: 159).<sup>103</sup>

The idea of the UCEDE was to create a party that would be “the expression of modern liberalism” in Argentina.<sup>104</sup> By “liberalism,” the party meant classical liberalism, with its focus on free markets and individual rights, particularly property rights. There was a long and influential tradition of liberal thought in Argentina, and liberal technocrats had maintained close connections to economic elites in Buenos Aires and played key roles in both civilian and military governments throughout the twentieth century.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, liberalism was poorly represented in the partisan sphere. Indeed, “no significant liberal party

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<sup>101</sup> See Shirley Christian, “Buenos Aires Journal; Tango With Peronist? Who’s Afraid?,” *The New York Times*, 4 July 1989.

<sup>102</sup> See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 4.

<sup>103</sup> The party was initially called the Republican Union. After it was discovered that a party in Córdoba already had that name, it was renamed the Union of the Democratic Center. See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” 5.

<sup>104</sup> See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 3.

<sup>105</sup> See Gibson (1990: 192-194; 1996: 66-69).



existed in Buenos Aires,” and “the party universe of liberalism was barren” (Gibson 1996: 104). Thus, in creating the UCEDE, Alsogaray and his followers hoped to fill this void in the party system. The party’s founders would have preferred to call it the “Liberal Party”;<sup>106</sup> however, they ultimately opted for a more anodyne name, since the presence of figures such as Martínez de Hoz in the outgoing military regime had sullied liberalism’s reputation.<sup>107</sup> The mission of the UCEDE, then, would be to rehabilitate and champion liberal ideas for a democratic age. Consistent with its ideological commitment to liberalism, the UCEDE’s program emphasized issues such as deregulation, increased foreign investment, deficit-cutting, privatization of state monopolies, tight monetary policy and, in general, the “reduc[tion]...of the size of the state and its ‘weight’ on the economy.”<sup>108</sup> This program placed the UCEDE on the right of the ideological spectrum with respect to socioeconomic issues,<sup>109</sup> since it championed property rights and was very skeptical of any redistributive role for the state.<sup>110</sup> Consistent with its support for a *laissez-faire* economic model, the UCEDE, like Chile’s UDI, also proclaimed its support for the “principle of subsidiarity.”<sup>111</sup> On the

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<sup>106</sup> See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 4.

<sup>107</sup> As one UCEDE leader put it: “[T]he military Proceso helped to make ‘liberalism’ a bad word” (Manuel Mora y Araujo, quoted in Braun 1988: 196).

<sup>108</sup> See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 6.

<sup>109</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, scholars such as Bobbio (1996) and Luna and Rovira (2014b) define the right primarily in terms of its aversion to economic redistribution.

<sup>110</sup> In the words of one UCEDE leader: “Production is more important than redistribution. It is better to produce more and be better off overall, even if there is more inequality, than not to produce more and to distribute better the little that there is” (Manuel Mora y Araujo, quoted in Braun 1988: 203).

<sup>111</sup> The UCEDE defined the principle of subsidiarity as follows: “[T]he state should abstain from intervening in anything that can be done by individuals or by intermediary organizations, within the bounds of the law and morality. It should only intervene...when there are problems whose solution is indispensable, but which are impossible for individuals or intermediary organizations [to solve].” See Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 7.

dimension that Ostiguy (2009a: 12) calls “attitudes toward order and authority,” the UCEDE’s stance was more mixed, with some party leaders taking traditional stances on issues such as human rights, abortion and the Catholic Church, while others took more progressive stands.<sup>112</sup> In light of its general ideological orientation, the UCEDE, like Chile’s UDI, El Salvador’s ARENA and Guatemala’s PAN, became a member of the Union of Latin American Parties (UPLA), a regional club for right-leaning parties.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to being right-leaning in ideological terms, the UCEDE was a conservative party in the sociological sense used in this study. As Gibson (1990, 1996) has demonstrated in detail, the party drew its core constituency from the upper strata of Argentine society, beginning its life as an “upper-class party of notables” (Gibson 1990: 185) and maintaining “a solid command of the upper-class vote” (Gibson 1990: 183). This was particularly true in the City of Buenos Aires, “where the bulk of Argentina’s wealth and influence was located” (Gibson 1996: 132), and where the UCEDE dominated the upper-class vote from its 1983 debut election onward. While other conservative parties also contested the 1983 election, it was the clear winner of this “intraconservative struggle,” with the competition for “core-constituency support [being] handily won by the UCEDE” (Gibson 1996: 132, 129).<sup>114</sup> This meant that while its initial vote share was small, it had strong “support among people with money and influence in the Buenos Aires region”

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<sup>112</sup> Author’s interview with former national UCEDE leader, 20 April 2012.

<sup>113</sup> See “Argentina” on the website of the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation, a right-leaning German foundation that works closely with the UPLA: [www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se/argentina-en/](http://www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se/argentina-en/). Accessed on 4 June 2014.

<sup>114</sup> In the 1983 election, the UCEDE’s main conservative rival in the City of Buenos Aires was the Federal Party led by Francisco Manrique. In the contest between the two parties, the UCEDE won a clear victory: “In the pivotal region of Buenos Aires, the elections inaugurated a new order for conservatism. The total vote share gathered by conservative parties in the city of Buenos Aires was 10.7 percent. Of this, 8.7 percent went to the UCEDE. Only 2 percent went to the federalist ticket led by Francisco Manrique” (Gibson 1996: 128).

(Gibson 1996: 132). Throughout the 1980s, the UCEDE came in either first or second place in the wealthiest districts of the City of Buenos Aires,<sup>115</sup> and in his statistical analysis of voting patterns in the city, Gibson (1996: 168) found that “[t]he most unambiguous finding...is a continued strong association between high social status and a vote for the UCEDE” (Gibson 1996: 168).<sup>116</sup> In short, the UCEDE was clearly a conservative party, drawing its core constituency from the upper strata of Argentine society.

Yet, while the UCEDE was a conservative party, it differed from parties such as Chile’s UDI in a fundamental respect: it was not an authoritarian successor party. As described above, the party was founded in 1982 by Álvaro Alsogaray in order to carry on his life-long crusade for liberalism in Argentina. Alsogaray’s democratic credentials were far from perfect.<sup>117</sup> In fact, he had held important positions in two military governments: after the 1955 coup, he was appointed undersecretary of commerce and then minister of industry, and after the 1966 coup, he was appointed ambassador to the United States.<sup>118</sup> His brother, Julio, was an army general who had played a prominent role in the 1966 coup, and Álvaro had himself served in the military as a young man, achieving the rank of captain (though he retired in 1946).<sup>119</sup> Yet, while Alsogaray had participated in military governments, he had

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<sup>115</sup> As Gibson (1996: 183-185) explains: “[B]etween 1985 and 1989 the UCEDE consistently defeated Peronism and Radicalism in the Socorro district, site of the most wealthy neighborhoods. In the 1985 and 1987 elections, it contested them for second place in all other electoral districts with a high proportion of upper-class voters. In 1989, the UCEDE came in first [place] in three (out of the four) electoral districts whose neighborhoods include the affluent *Barrio Norte* and Palermo districts of Buenos Aires, and it battled the Radical Party for first place in the Belgrano district.”

<sup>116</sup> Gibson (1996: 165) examines voting patterns based on education, employment and income.

<sup>117</sup> For a useful political biography of Alsogaray, see Gibson (1996: 110-112). See also Alsogaray’s 1993 memoir, *Alvaro Alsogaray: Experiencias de 50 años de política y economía argentina*.

<sup>118</sup> See Gibson (1996: 111, 119).

<sup>119</sup> See Gibson (1996: 119, 110).

also held important positions in civilian governments, serving as the minister of economy and minister of labor under one elected Radical president (Arturo Frondizi), and again as minister of the economy under an appointed Radical president (José María Guido).<sup>120</sup> He even accepted a position during the first Perón government as head of a new state agency called the Merchant Air Fleet, the precursor to the future national airline, *Aerolíneas Argentinas*.<sup>121</sup> In short, Alsogaray had been a veritable fixture of Argentine politics for decades, participating in a range of governments along the way. One way to make sense of his apparent lack of discrimination in accepting posts is to think of him as a kind of “ideological opportunist.” In his unflinching, life-long devotion to liberalism, he was a true ideologue; in his pursuit of liberal goals, however, he was an opportunist, accepting power no matter who offered it to him. As Gibson (1996: 109) puts it: “Throughout his career, Alsogaray was driven by the goal of controlling economic policy and charting Argentina on a course toward a free-market economy. Like Melville’s Captain Ahab, he was obsessively single-minded in that goal. However, the path to Alsogaray’s fixed purpose was not, as in Ahab’s case, ‘laid down with iron rails.’ Alsogaray’s chosen paths would always be multiple, and the institutional vessels carrying him toward his purpose would constantly change.”

Regardless of the positions that Alsogaray had held in past military regimes, the UCEDE was not an authoritarian successor party for a simple reason: Alsogaray had not held any position in the Proceso, the most recent military regime. While other prominent liberals were appointed to key posts, Alsogaray remained on the sidelines during the 1976-

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<sup>120</sup> In 1958, Frondizi was elected president, albeit in an election in which Peronism was proscribed. In 1962, Frondizi was overthrown in a coup and replaced by his vice president, Guido. See Gibson (1996: 115-118).

<sup>121</sup> See Gibson (1996: 110). For a description of Alsogaray’s work during the first Perón government, see “Menem-Alsogaray, pero en 1951,” *Página/12*, 11 November 1990.

1983 period.<sup>122</sup> This meant that, by the time of the transition to democracy, Alsogaray “was one of the few historic liberal leaders not tarnished by association with the military regime” (Gibson 1996: 106). The same was true of other important UCEDE founders, such as José Juan Manny, one of the party’s first two deputies (along with Álvaro Alsogaray), and Adelina Dalesio de Viola, who would become one of the party’s most prominent leaders.<sup>123</sup> María Julia Alsogaray, the daughter of Álvaro and also a high-profile UCEDE leader, had served the Proceso government as Argentina’s delegate to the Latin American Association of Free Trade (ALALC) in Montevideo, Uruguay; however, this was hardly an important position in the regime, and she was not even in Argentina between 1977 and 1983.<sup>124</sup>

In addition to not having served in the most recent military regime, Álvaro Alsogaray had been critical of both the 1976 coup and various aspects of the Proceso. In March 1976, a few days prior to the coup that would topple Isabel Perón, he had issued a statement in the national press in which he asserted: “Nothing would be more contrary to the interests of the country than precipitating a coup at this time.”<sup>125</sup> Though hardly sympathetic to the Perón government, he warned that a coup would transform the politicians responsible for the country’s crisis into “martyrs,” and predicted that within three months the government

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<sup>122</sup> Gibson (1996: 106) suggests that this was not by choice, writing that Alsogaray “had been repeatedly passed over by the military as candidate for minister of the economy during the Proceso.” See also Gutiérrez (1992: 90).

<sup>123</sup> On Adelina Dalesio de Viola’s background, see Domán and Olivera (1989: 61-64) and “La mujer y la política: Adelina de Viola (UCD),” *La Nación*, 27 October 1983.

<sup>124</sup> María Julia Alsogaray was also not an UCEDE founder. She joined the party after returning from Uruguay, and her meteoric rise within the party—which was strongly supported by her father, Álvaro Alsogaray—was greatly resented by some UCEDE founders. On María Julia Alsogaray’s background, see Domán and Olivera (1989: 50-58). Also author’s interview with former national UCEDE leader, 26 June 2012.

<sup>125</sup> The statement is reprinted in Alsogaray (1993: 91-92). See also Gibson (1996: 122).

would collapse on its own.<sup>126</sup> After the coup, he remained something of a gadfly of the Proceso, criticizing regime officials for their handling of the economy (though praising the “war against subversion”).<sup>127</sup> He was especially critical of the regime’s civilian technocrats, claiming that they were not really liberals but instead “inflationary statist[s] [*dirigistas*].”<sup>128</sup> In 1982, while announcing the formation of the UCEDE, he charged that the military regime’s economic policymakers had “increased the country’s debt to incredible levels, dr[iven] the highest inflation in the world, destroyed a large part of the business system” and created “recession and unemployment.”<sup>129</sup> He also criticized the decision to invade the Falkland/Malvinas Islands, making the unpopular argument that there was no possible way that Argentina could win a war against Great Britain.<sup>130</sup> In short, Alsogaray’s non-participation in the Proceso and his public critiques of its policies meant that the UCEDE could plausibly “claim to lead a new liberal electoral movement that was not continuous with the disastrous experience of military rule” (Gibson 1996: 106).

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<sup>126</sup> The statement is reprinted in Alsogaray (1993: 91-92). See also Gibson (1996: 122).

<sup>127</sup> Although Alsogaray was extremely critical of some aspects of the Proceso (particularly the economy and the invasion of the Falkland/Malvinas Islands), he was not critical of the military’s conduct in the so-called “war against subversion.” In his memoir, he asserts that “[i]t was necessary to fight a truly antisubversive war in order to defeat them [guerrillas and terrorists],” and pointed out that the counterinsurgency had actually begun during the government of Isabel Perón (Alsogaray 1993: 122, 125). While he admitted that there had been “abuses and excesses,” he insisted that “the charges of ‘genocide and state terrorism,’ which a formidable national and international campaign organized by activists and organizations supposedly dedicated to the defense of human rights against a military that carried out the presidential order to annihilate the enemy and saved the country from a catastrophe such as Castroism, are totally false. War is always a major tragedy and the methods used in it are never humanitarian” (Alsogaray 1993: 127). For one of Alsogaray’s major public statements on the topic, see “Unión del Centro Democrático: Pide un informe sobre la guerra antisubversiva,” *La Nación*, March 4 1983.

<sup>128</sup> See Alsogaray (1993: 97).

<sup>129</sup> Unión del Centro Democrático, “Orígenes del partido y documentos iniciales relacionados con su fundación,” July 1982, 2.

<sup>130</sup> See Alsogaray (1993: 128-132) and Gibson (1996: 122).

Over time, the UCEDE did absorb some officials from the Proceso into its ranks. These included relatively high-profile figures, such as Jorge Aguado, the former military-appointed governor of the Province of Buenos Aires, and Osvaldo Cacciatore, the former military-appointed mayor of the City of Buenos Aires.<sup>131</sup> The incorporation of such figures undoubtedly diluted the UCEDE's democratic bona fides. Nevertheless, it is still wrong to label the UCEDE as an authoritarian successor party, for a few reasons. First, the UCEDE was not *founded* by high-ranking incumbents of the country's most recent dictatorship,<sup>132</sup> and, as such, does not meet the definition used in this study. The fact that such individuals later joined the party is best understood as a *result* of the UCEDE's initial success: as it became Argentina's most important right-leaning party, it naturally attracted right-leaning Argentines, some of whom had participated in the Proceso. Second, as UCEDE leaders constantly pointed out, it was hardly the only party in Argentina that included former collaborators of the Proceso in its ranks. In the words of one former UCEDE leader: "No political force has been free of participation in the coups d'état of the Argentine state... [A]lmost everyone participated in *de facto* governments, but we are the only ones associated with coups... I repeat: in all political parties, there are people who participated in coups d'état."<sup>133</sup> UCEDE members were particularly indignant about what they perceived as the hypocrisy of the Radicals, whom they accused of having contributed more collaborators to the Proceso than any other party.<sup>134</sup> Finally, the UCEDE made strenuous efforts to distance itself from the

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<sup>131</sup> See "Aguado en el partido de Alvaro Alsogaray," *La Nación*, 23 March 1984, and "El faraón vuelve: Cacciatore, probable candidato de la UCeDé," *Página/12*, 4 July 1993. See also Gutiérrez (1992: 42-53).

<sup>132</sup> This point was flagged in author's interview with an UCEDE founder, 19 April 2012.

<sup>133</sup> Pedro Benegas, quoted in Braun (1988: 147).

<sup>134</sup> In the words of one former UCEDE leader: "If one examines the list of ministers of the interior in the Argentine military governments, from 1955 to the present, one finds that if any group predominated, it was the

Proceso, and from anti-democratic activities more generally. One party leader, for example, claimed that the UCEDE “is without a doubt that the party with the least amount of people among its leaders that have been linked to military processes.”<sup>135</sup> Whether this claim was true or not, it presented a striking contrast to Chile’s UDI, whose secretary general boasted in 1991: “We have the group most representative of the work of the military government.”<sup>136</sup> Similarly, when junior officers launched an uprising in mid-April 1987,<sup>137</sup> UCEDE activists joined other parties in a mass protest against the uprising,<sup>138</sup> and a few days later Álvaro Alsogaray joined other political leaders in signing a document called the “Act of Democratic Commitment” condemning the military rebels.<sup>139</sup> In short, while the UCEDE was not totally free of links to past dictatorships, it was not an authoritarian successor party either, and its democratic credentials were as good as any conservative party realistically could have been in Argentina at the time, given its long history of elite-military collaboration.

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Radicals. If one analyzes the list of functionaries in the last military Proceso, one finds that there were 70 Radical mayors...who were elected during the previous democratic process and that were maintained in their positions” (Manuel Mora y Araujo, quoted in Braun 1988: 207). In addition, Radical leader Ricardo Balbín had urged the military to carry out a “legalist coup” against Isabel Perón, and “most of the Radical Party, including the winning presidential candidate in 1999, Fernando De la Rúa, supported Videla’s coup in 1976” (Lewis 2002: 124, 243). The Peronists were also not free of ties to the Proceso: they had attempted to negotiate a pact with leaders of the military regime (Munck 1998: 149-159), many of their members were opposed to human rights trials of former regime officials (McGuire 1997: 20-21) and in some cases they worked with notorious former regime officials, as when, in the 1990s, a Peronist governor of the Province of Buenos Aires “hired an ex-cop, Luis Patti, who had been accused of torturing victims, as his special adviser on crime” (Lewis 2002: 247). The same Peronist governor also hired Aldo Rico, the main organizer of the 1987 “*carapintada*” uprising, to be his justice minister (Lewis 2002: 247).

<sup>135</sup> Óscar Jiménez Peña, quoted in Braun (1988: 240).

<sup>136</sup> See “La cosecha de la UDI,” *Qué Pasa*, 29 April 1991.

<sup>137</sup> On the “*carapintada*” uprising, see Norden (1996a, 1996b) and Payne (2000: 51-100).

<sup>138</sup> See “Masivo respaldo de la ciudadanía a la convocatoria,” *La Nación*, 18 April 1987.

<sup>139</sup> See “Se firmó el ‘compromiso democrático,’ ” *La Nación*, 20 April 1987.



The conditions of the UCEDE's birth meant that it was born in a far weaker position than Chile's UDI. As explained in Chapters 3 and 4, the UDI was able to draw on various forms of authoritarian inheritance, including a popular and well-known brand, a territorial organization, clientelistic networks, business connections and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. The UCEDE was born with none of these things.<sup>140</sup> First, it lacked a popular party brand. While it is true that Alsogaray was a well-known public figure with "strong name recognition" (Gibson 1996: 106), the brand of "*Alsogaraísmo*" had little mass appeal.<sup>141</sup> Liberalism had always struggled to attract large numbers of Argentine voters, and Alsogaray's stern public persona and relentless insistence on the need for austerity to tackle inflation made him come off as a curmudgeon and a scold.<sup>142</sup> This unpopularity had already been demonstrated in Alsogaray's two earlier party-building attempts, the Independent Civic Party and New Force, which had both performed abysmally at the polls.<sup>143</sup> Second, the UCEDE had almost no territorial organization. While it was able to draw on some activists in Buenos Aires from Alsogaray's earlier party-building attempts, such as José Juan Manny and Adelina Dalesio de Viola, these did not add up to the sort of

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<sup>140</sup> As Gibson (1996: 104) puts it: "All aspects surrounding the activities of party politics—building organizations and party networks, developing ideological appeals, recruiting leadership cadres, building a mass following—would have to be started from scratch."

<sup>141</sup> According to one UCEDE founder, the number of voters who were not supporters of "populist statism" and who, as such, could be considered natural supporters of a liberal party like the UCEDE, constituted a "super-micro-minority" (author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 19 April 2012).

<sup>142</sup> One interviewee compared Alsogaray's frequent warnings about inflation to an aunt of hers who used to warn that her niece's cooking was about to burn, and then would gloat when it happened; she also compared him to someone who tells you to teach your child to cross the road properly, and then after he or she is run over, says, "See? I told you so" (author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 16 April 2012). Others highlighted that, while many people respected Alsogaray, very few felt affection for him, even within the UCEDE. In the words of one of his long-time collaborators: "He was very, let's say, withdrawn. Everyone called him '*usted*' [the formal version of 'you' in Spanish] or '*ingeniero*' [his formal title as an engineer]. He wasn't a friendly guy. He was not a politician" (author's interview former national UCEDE leader, 19 April 2012).

<sup>143</sup> See Gibson (1996: 115, 122).

mass activist networks constitutive of a strong organization. According to one UCEDE leader who had participated in one of Alsogaray's previous party-building efforts, "New Force had not been a real party," and had been so organizationally weak that it had had to lie about its number of members in order to register.<sup>144</sup> Outside of the City of Buenos Aires, the situation was even worse, since the UCEDE had no organization whatsoever. In short, in the words of one of Alsogaray's close collaborators: "We started from zero."<sup>145</sup> Third, the UCEDE had weak business connections. Business in Argentina had long been wary of partisan politics, preferring to pursue its interests through corporatist organizations and direct contact with the executive branch.<sup>146</sup> One partial exception was the 1973 general election, when "Alsogaray succeeded in mobilizing major corporate financial contributions [for New Force]" (Gibson 1996: 121). However, New Force performed extremely poorly in that election, which meant that, if anything, the UCEDE inherited a *negative* reputation among businessmen, since Alsogaray's most recent party-building effort had clearly not provided good returns to investment. The fact that the UCEDE received a mere 1.6 percent of the vote in the 1983 election for the Chamber of Deputies, its debut election, surely did little to allay business skepticism about the usefulness of backing a conservative party.

Finally, the UCEDE lacked a strong source of party cohesion. Unlike Chile's UDI, which always exhibited a high degree of unity, discipline and loyalty to the party leadership—which, as I argued in Chapters 3 and 4, were forged during a history of joint struggle—the

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<sup>144</sup> Author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 16 April 2012.

<sup>145</sup> Author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 19 April 2012.

<sup>146</sup> See Gibson (1990: 206-209; 1996: 158-163) and Acuña (1998: 58).

UCEDE was characterized by vicious and nearly constant infighting.<sup>147</sup> Almost from the beginning, the UCEDE was divided into multiple internal factions, which were based on shifting disagreements over ideology, strategy and personality.<sup>148</sup> While alliances among factions were made and unmade,<sup>149</sup> and the particular nature of grievances evolved, the most consistent conflict was between Álvaro Alsogaray and his supporters (especially his daughter, María Julia Alsogaray) and younger leaders who sought control of the party.<sup>150</sup> One former youth leader engaged in these struggles recalls them as follows: “It was a bit like ‘it’s us or them,’ without the idea of...‘we’re all in the party.’ [...] We wanted to kill them—not

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<sup>147</sup> In his memoir, Alsogaray (1993) would identify this proneness to infighting, or “*internismo*,” as one of the main causes of the UCEDE’s collapse. In his words: “[The] most important cause [of the UCEDE’s decline]...was what has been called ‘*internismo*.’ This consisted of unleashing in the heart of the party internal struggles whose only motive was spurious ambition, the purpose of ‘climbing the pyramid’ and the immediate satisfaction of personal plans” (Alsogaray 1993: 305). In his view, those who sought to displace him as party leader showed “absolute disrespect for the party, its founder and the leaders who accompanied him,” and, in so doing, “did great damage to the party” (Alsogaray 1993: 306). While Alsogaray admitted that other parties also had internal power struggles play out before the public’s watchful eye, he believed that “[t]he party most affected by this unacceptable practice has been, without a doubt, the UCEDE” (Alsogaray 1993: 234).

<sup>148</sup> The party’s first major rift, which emerged soon after party formation and was driven by an organized faction called the Liberal Union, seems to have been the most ideological of the party’s internal conflicts. Liberal Union leaders attempted to make the UCEDE more liberal on moral issues (abortion, divorce, etc.), instead of just liberal with respect to the economy (author’s interview with former Liberal Union leader, 20 April 2012). While such ideological debates never went away, later struggles seem to have been more about strategy—specifically, about the extent to which the party should “popularize” its message—and about personal issues—for example, whether Álvaro Alsogaray was being nepotistic when he helped his daughter, María Julia, to rise through the party’s ranks while blocking the rise of others, such as Adelina Dalesio de Viola (author’s interviews with former national UCEDE leader, 16 April 2012; former national UCEDE leader, 26 June 2012; and former national UCEDE leader, 19 April 2012; also, interview with Pedro Benegas in Braun 1988: 139-155).

<sup>149</sup> For example, Adelina Dalesio de Viola, who was considered to be a protégé of Álvaro Alsogaray, soon turned against him after María Julia Alsogaray joined the party in 1984 and received strong backing from her father. In 1988, however, Adelina Dalesio de Viola and María Julia Alsogaray teamed up—with Álvaro Alsogaray’s support—against another faction of the party. Shortly thereafter, however, Dalesio de Viola helped to lead an uprising against María Julia and Álvaro Alsogaray. Sometimes even family members were pitted against one another, with María Julia Alsogaray and her brother, known as “Alvarito,” leading opposing factions in internal elections. For a sample of some of these shifting, never-ending fights, see “Adelina y María Julia contra los dinosaurios,” *La Semana*, 27 April 1988; “Alsogaray dejó de ser neutral y optó por María Julia y Adelina,” *Página/12*, 28 April 1988; “En el nombre del hijo,” *Página/12*, 26 June 1988; “María Julia y Alvarito disputan la herencia,” *Página/12*, 17 May 1990. See also Domán and Olivera (1989: 50-69).

<sup>150</sup> For descriptions of one of the most high-profile attempts to overthrow Álvaro Alsogaray, led by Adelina Dalesio de Viola, see Domán and Olivera (1989: 66-67) and “Adelina, ¿y ahora qué?,” *La Semana*, 13 May 1987.

physically, but politically. The internal fights were brutal... Our fights were terrible; they were terrible. It was like the enemies were inside the party instead of outside.”<sup>151</sup> Another party leader close to Alsogaray offered a similar assessment, along with an insightful reflection on the UCEDE’s general lack of unity: “We lacked Poxipol [an Argentine brand of glue] to unite us.” He continues: “Why did people come together? They came together because of Alsogaray’s call saying that we could no longer continue to be a statist, populist and inflationary country. Very well. You can have loyalty to the idea [of liberalism], but [you also need] a glue that keeps party members united, no matter what happens. That never formed... [T]he thing is, people came from totally different sectors... So there was never that spirit of enterprise and that spirit of [belonging to] a common force.”<sup>152</sup> In short, because its members had never “fought in the trenches” together, the UCEDE, unlike authoritarian successor parties such as Chile’s UDI, never developed a strong source of cohesion. The result was infighting and, eventually, schism.

Despite being born with limited stocks of starting political capital, the UCEDE was able to overcome some of its limitations enough to experience considerable growth during the 1980s. While the party made little headway with respect to business, which remained wary of it,<sup>153</sup> and cohesion, with the party endlessly convulsed by internal feuds, it did begin to make significant progress in terms of brand and organization. First, with respect to brand, the UCEDE began to change the nature of its appeal in order to attract the support of non-

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<sup>151</sup> Author’s interview with former UCEDE leader, 9 May 2012.

<sup>152</sup> Author’s interview with former national UCEDE leader, 19 April 2012.

<sup>153</sup> See Gibson (1990: 206-209; 1996: 158-163).

elite voters.<sup>154</sup> This “popularization” strategy was closely associated with the figure of Adelina Dalesio de Viola, who described herself as “*la negra de la UCEDE*,”<sup>155</sup> and who was compared to Eva Perón due to her flamboyance and claims to represent Argentina’s popular sectors.<sup>156</sup> While the party’s ideology and program did not change, party leaders did begin to use a “different language.”<sup>157</sup> Specifically, Dalesio de Viola spoke in a colloquial manner and attempted to win votes through what Gibson (1996: 153) calls “the politicization of the concrete.” Instead of making sophisticated arguments about fiscal policy, money supply and so forth, she and other party leaders<sup>158</sup> sought the support of middle- and lower-class voters by denouncing the supposed sins of the bloated Argentine state in more immediate and emotional terms: “Hospitals without beds, children dying for lack of medication, inadequate and poorly provided basic services by an uncaring and capricious state...these were the themes that fueled her fiery, indignant, and tear-filled speeches” (Gibson 1996: 156). Without a doubt, this “colloquial style of speech, exuberance, and common-sense language contrasted sharply with the aloof, pedantic, and ‘oligarchic’ demeanor of *liberalismo*’s historic leadership” (Gibson 1990: 202), and it began to bear fruit. By “popularizing” its message,

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<sup>154</sup> For a detailed description of this “popularization” strategy, see Gibson (1990: 202-205; 1996: 154-158).

<sup>155</sup> As Gibson (1996: 254, n. 27) explains: “The term *negra*, or *negro*, is used in Argentina to denote people of lower social origins (often without regard to skin or hair color), and is a common disparaging term used by the well-to-do in reference to the working and lower classes.”

<sup>156</sup> See Domán and Olivera (1989: 61-64) and Gibson (1990: 202-205; 1996: 154-158). She claims to have been honored by this comparison when it came from Peronists (see interview with Adelina Dalesio de Viola in Braun 1988: 175).

<sup>157</sup> Author’s interview with former national UCEDE leader, 16 April 2012.

<sup>158</sup> Another UCEDE leader who sought to popularize the UCEDE’s message was Alberto Albamonte. He used creative antics to spread the UCEDE’s message, such as riding an elephant in downtown Buenos Aires to illustrate the “elephantine” nature of the Argentine state, or appearing in public with a large plastic chicken to protest the government’s mishandling of the importation of a several tons of frozen chickens. See “El showman del alvarazo,” *La Semana*, 7 November 1985, and “Usted, ¿se comería un pollito?,” *Página/12*, 10 June 1988. Also author’s interview with former national UCEDE leader, 12 May 2012.

the UCEDE's brand started to evolve into something with potentially mass appeal. While this rebranding effort appears to have turned off some of the UCEDE's upper-class core constituency,<sup>159</sup> it had the intended effect of making electoral inroads with both middle-and lower-class voters in the City of Buenos Aires.<sup>160</sup> Writing in the late 1980s, Gibson (1990: 185) captured this when he asserted that the UCEDE had become "increasingly successful in transcending its appeal to the upper class," and that it was beginning to make "the transition from upper-class party of notables to that of a polyclass electoral alliance."

The UCEDE also began to make progress in addressing its organizational deficit. This was a two-pronged process. First, the UCEDE began to expand its formal organization, opening up base-level party cells known as "Civic Centers" throughout the City of Buenos Aires (including in slums known as "*villas*"),<sup>161</sup> and, to a lesser extent, in the Province of Buenos Aires (especially those parts belonging to the greater metropolitan area of Buenos Aires known as the "*Conurbano*"),<sup>162</sup> as well as in a few other provinces, such as Santa Fe and Córdoba.<sup>163</sup> The party also forged close links with a new and rapidly expanding liberal university organization called the *Unión para la Apertura Universitaria* (UPAU),<sup>164</sup> with UPAU leaders such as Carlos Maslatón, Juan Curutchet and Óscar Jiménez Peña joining the

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<sup>159</sup> See Gibson (1990: 205-206; 1996: 157-158).

<sup>160</sup> For a detailed analysis of these trends, see Gibson (1996: 163-177).

<sup>161</sup> See "Liberales en la villa," *Página/12*, 5 March 1989.

<sup>162</sup> On the UCEDE's presence in the Province of Buenos Aires, see Unión del Centro Democrático, Provincia de Buenos Aires, "Reseña histórica y principios rectores sobre la fundación en su 10º aniversario, 1982-1992."

<sup>163</sup> Author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 19 April 2012.

<sup>164</sup> See "UPAU, la derecha con carnet universitario: Los bichos liberales," *Página/12*, 27 December 1987.

UCEDE and becoming relatively high-profile party leaders.<sup>165</sup> As a result, the UCEDE became a true player in the City of Buenos Aires, competing for votes neck-and-neck with the Radicals and Peronists, and capable of organizing mass rallies with tens of thousands of participants.<sup>166</sup> In most of the rest of the country, however, the UCEDE remained organizationally weak. Indeed, the UCEDE remained largely a Buenos Aires-based party, with “over 90% of [its votes]...concentrated in the Buenos Aires region” (Gibson 1990: 183).<sup>167</sup> In order to compensate for its organizational weakness in the country’s interior, the UCEDE pursued a second strategy: it reached out to provincial conservative parties, which “possessed ready-made party networks for local conservative mobilization” (Gibson 1996: 183). The result was an electoral coalition known as the Alliance of the Center,<sup>168</sup> which included several provincial parties, but in which the UCEDE was the senior partner and the “heart of the alliance.”<sup>169</sup> While electoral coalitions of the right were not new to Argentina,

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<sup>165</sup> Author’s interviews with former UPAU leader, 25 March 2012; former UPAU leader, 14 April 2012; and former UPAU leader, 20 July 2012.

<sup>166</sup> In October 1985, for example, the UCEDE held a mass rally in one of Buenos Aires’ main soccer stadiums, with between 65,000 and 70,000 people in attendance, despite pouring rain. See “Una multitud en el acto de la Alianza de Centro,” *La Nación*, 31 October 1985, and “El Alvarazo,” *La Semana*, 7 November 1985.

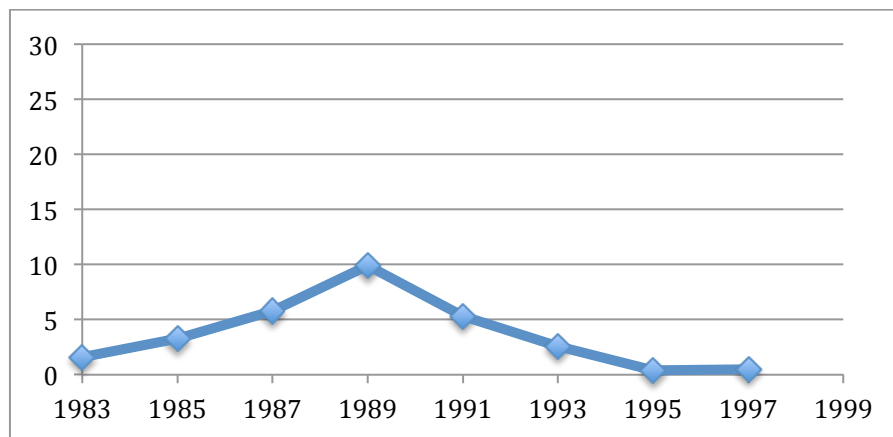
<sup>167</sup> At the same time, it is important to note that the Buenos Aires region “includes nearly half of the country’s population,” and is “the epicenter of ideological and cultural dissemination for the country” (Gibson 1990: 183).

<sup>168</sup> As Gibson (1990: 197) explains, the Alliance of the Center “link[ed] the UCEDE to some of the most important conservative parties of the interior,” and was significant because “[i]t was the first conservative electoral alliance in 50 years to unite provincial parties of the interior with a consolidated Buenos Aires conservative party.” It included the following parties: “The *Alianza de Centro* linked the UCEDE to the *Partido Autonomista* and the *Partido Liberal* of Corrientes, which govern the province under a consociational arrangement[;] the *Partido Demócrata Progresista*, of the important Santa Fe province[;] the *Unión Demócrata de Centro* of Córdoba[;] the *Partido Demócrata* of Mendoza[;] and the balance of *Concentración Demócrata*, a federation of small parties named *Demócrata* in a number of provinces” (Gibson 1990: 220, n. 15). However, the ambitions for the Alliance of the Center were undercut by the emergence of a second coalition of provincial conservative parties in the 1989 election around the Radical candidate, Eduardo Angeloz, called the Independent Federalist Coalition (CFI). See Gibson (1996: 185-186) and “Apoyo provinciano a Angeloz,” *Página/12*, 21 October 1988.

<sup>169</sup> Author’s interview with former UCEDE leader, 9 May 2012.

the Alliance of the Center was viewed by its participants as different, potentially laying the groundwork for a permanent confederation of parties.<sup>170</sup> In the words of Alberto Natale, a provincial party leader who served as Álvaro Alsogaray's running mate in the 1989 presidential election: "I would say that the most important difference is in the spirit that nourishes this alliance. In previous alliances, one thought more about the circumstantial, about the moment. Now, a will is emerging to make this alliance into a permanent agreement that will allow us to make the transition toward the creation of a political force that has its very own characteristics."<sup>171</sup> In short, the UCEDE seemed to be making progress not only in terms of brand, developing a message with potentially widespread appeal, but also in terms of organization, opening party offices and forging an alliance with provincial parties with their own organizational networks.

Figure 5.1. UCEDE in Chamber of Deputies Elections (%)<sup>172</sup>



<sup>170</sup> Author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 26 June 2012.

<sup>171</sup> Alberto Natale of Santa Fe's Democratic Progressive Party, quoted in Braun (1988: 212).

<sup>172</sup> Source: Middlebrook (2000a).



As a result of these partial solutions to its lack of starting political capital, the UCEDE enjoyed considerable growth during the 1980s. Although the party won a miniscule 1.6 percent in its debut election, the 1983 election for the Chamber of Deputies, it saw its vote share surge in subsequent electoral cycles (see Figure 5.1). In the 1985 and 1987 elections for Chamber of Deputies, it won 3.3 and 5.8 percent, respectively, and in 1989, it won 9.9 percent as part of the Alliance of the Center coalition. While the UCEDE was still a relatively small party in electoral terms, its upward trajectory was clear and it “emerged as the country’s fastest-growing political party, and its third electoral force” (Gibson 1990: 183). Moreover, it gained a level of visibility that Argentine conservative parties had rarely had during most of the twentieth century, with figures such as Adelina Dalesio de Viola elevated to celebrity status, its leaders becoming a frequent presence in the national media and its deputies in congress holding relatively high-profile positions.<sup>173</sup> Moreover, the UCEDE enjoyed a level of influence on public debate far greater than its electoral weight. In the lead-up to the May 1989 general election, Alsogaray captured this well when he expressed his satisfaction that other parties were stealing the UCEDE’s ideas, asserting: “[A]fter thirty years of preaching in the desert, seeing our adversaries use our language means that we can say that, intellectually, we have triumphed.”<sup>174</sup> The UCEDE’s increasing strength, both electorally and intellectually, led to considerable hype. As Gibson (1990: 180) put it while

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<sup>173</sup> For example, after the UCEDE forged a parliamentary group with smaller conservative parties in the Chamber of Deputies, this conservative bloc became “the third force in the national congress,” which had important implications: “This third-party status gave Alvaro Alsogaray the second vice presidency of the Chamber of Deputies. The UCEDE gained considerable visibility from this appointment in congressional deliberations, and the Argentine public grew accustomed to the once unlikely sight of Argentine liberalism’s [sic] leader presiding over sessions of Congress” (Gibson 1996: 147).

<sup>174</sup> Quoted in “Alsogaray dijo que ganó intelectualmente,” *La Nación*, 24 April 1989. See also Alsogaray (1993: 161).

writing in the late 1980s: “The rise of the UCEDE has been widely greeted as evidence that the long-sought democratic mass conservative party might be in the making.”

### The Fall of the UCEDE

In the 1989 general election, the UCEDE had its strongest performance ever—and then immediately began its precipitous decline. In the 1991 and 1993 elections for Chamber of Deputies, the party hemorrhaged votes, and by 1995, it had, for all intents and purposes, disappeared (see Figure 5.1). What explains the fall of the UCEDE? The most obvious answer is the election of the Peronist candidate Carlos Menem to the presidency, and his subsequent implementation of radical free-market reforms. As I explain in this section, Menem had campaigned on a statist and expansionist economic platform; after winning the election, however, he abruptly changed course and carried out neoliberal reforms. In so doing, he not only aped much of the UCEDE’s program, but also invited several of its historic leaders to help him implement it. This exacerbated existing divisions within the UCEDE, with disagreements over how best to position the party vis-à-vis the new government. As the UCEDE descended into ugly infighting—and as Menem systematically carried out much of the UCEDE’s program—the party suffered mass defections, both by voters and party leaders. Yet, while the Menem government was clearly the catalyst of the UCEDE’s collapse, I argue that the ultimate cause can be traced to the party’s lack of authoritarian inheritance, in two ways. First, because the UCEDE lacked a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle, it failed to respond to Menem’s overtures in a unified and coherent manner, and later, was unable to prevent the defection of several of its

leaders to the Peronist camp. Second, because the UCEDE, even at its height, was never a large party—which, as I argued in the previous section, could be explained by its lack of authoritarian inheritance (brand, organization, etc.)—it was perfectly reasonable for voters and party leaders to conclude that it was simply a not a viable enterprise. When presented with a president demonstrably committed to free-market reform (Menem) and a “populist” party capable of winning elections that appeared to be in the process of transforming into a conservative party (Peronism), it was rational for them to abandon the upstart UCEDE in favor of a seemingly likeminded political force with more realistic prospects.

If Menem’s turn to neoliberalism was the main trigger of the UCEDE’s collapse, it was not a turn that many would have predicted. During the 1989 election, much of the debate centered on how to rescue Argentina’s collapsing economy. While the economic performance of the dictatorship had been extremely bad, the performance of the democratic government of Raúl Alfonsín was arguably even worse. During Alfonsín’s six years in office, average annual inflation was 823.0 percent, and average annual growth was -2.2 percent.<sup>175</sup> In 1989, the year of the election, inflation hit 3,079.8 percent and growth was -6.2 percent.<sup>176</sup> The solutions that Alsogaray offered were the same ones he had been preaching his entire adult life: “[He] called for liberalization of trade, the exchange rate, and wages; for speedy privatizations; and for honoring standing agreements with international creditors” (Stokes 2001: 45). The Radical candidate, Eduardo Angeloz, adopted a similar line, abandoning the

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<sup>175</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 175). Alfonsín was in office from December 1983 to July 1989. The figures cited above are for the 1984-1989 period.

<sup>176</sup> See Haggard and Kaufman (1995: 191).

social democratic orientation of President Alfonsín in favor of the free market.<sup>177</sup> Thus, he promised that he would “liberalize trade, privatize state-owned enterprises, and achieve good standing with international financial institutions” (Stokes 2001: 45). The campaign of the Peronist candidate, Carlos Menem, was very different. In addition to highlighting Menem’s outsized personality, including “his fondness for soccer, race cars, and fashion models” (Stokes 2001: 45), the campaign suggested that he would pursue a heterodox economic course. Thus, instead of privatizations, “Menem championed a development model that included state ownership of heavy industry, utilities, and oil”; instead of austerity packages (*paquetazos*), he promised a “*salariozo*,” or “a big upward shock to wages”; to deal with inflation, he “favored a ‘social pact’ to establish price and wage levels”; and instead of paying foreign creditors, he pledged that “he would not pay Argentina’s debt ‘with the hunger of the Argentine people’ ” (Stokes 2001: 46). In short, Menem’s economic program “was nationalist and expansionist” (Stokes 2001: 45), the very opposite of the UCEDE’s.

It was thus a surprise when, shortly after being elected, Menem declared himself a convert to neoliberalism and embarked on one of the most radical programs of free-market reform ever enacted in Latin America. This shift on the economy was the quintessential example of what Stokes (2001) calls “neoliberalism by surprise.”<sup>178</sup> After running as the statist defender of the common man in the 1989 election, Menem did an about-face and embraced “policies like the ones his opponents in the campaign had advocated” (Stokes

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<sup>177</sup> See, for example, “Angeloz prometió mano dura para reformar el Estado y privatizar,” *Página/12*, 26 August 1988. See also Alsogaray (1993: 304-305) and Gibson (1996: 184-185).

<sup>178</sup> This phenomenon has also been described as “bait-and-switch” (Drake 1991: 36). For an important analysis of another clear case of policy switching—that of Alberto Fujimori in Peru—see Roberts (1995).

2001: 47).<sup>179</sup> Out were the promises of a *salario* and hints of a moratorium on the foreign debt; in was a promise to carry out, as Menem put it, “a tough, costly, and severe adjustment,” which would require “major surgery, no anesthesia.”<sup>180</sup> Menem was not bluffing. During his first term in office, he carried out a package of free-market reforms that were “more radical than those of most comparable cases,” and that were “faster and more far-reaching than those of Margaret Thatcher in England, Augusto Pinochet in Chile, and Solidarity in Poland” (Levitsky 2003: 2).<sup>181</sup> While the 1976-1983 military regime had also tried to carry out free-market reforms, “Argentina in the 1990s underwent a free market capitalist revolution far more extreme than anything that Videla and José Martínez de Hoz [had] ever attempted” (Lewis 2002: 243). In carrying out these reforms, Menem was not only turning his back on his campaign promises, but also on Peronism’s decades-long tradition of economic statism.<sup>182</sup> Domingo Cavallo, Menem’s economy minister from 1991 to 1996, once described the government’s economic policy as “changing everything that Perón did after the Second World War.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> It is not entirely clear what compelled Menem to make such a dramatic policy shift. In his memoir, Álvaro Alsogaray, who, as we shall see, would become an important adviser to Menem, cites a few possible causes. In his words: “I once asked Dr. Menem what his reasons were for introducing such a far-reaching change, and one that was so contrary to Peronist tradition. The first (which he probably said out of courtesy) was that for fifteen years, he had read much of my work and shared the main aspects of the line of thinking that I represented. The second [was] that these ideas were taking hold all over the world. And the third [was] that ‘there was no other option’ ” (Alsogaray 1993: 169).

<sup>180</sup> Quoted in Stokes (2001: 47).

<sup>181</sup> Specifically, Menem “eliminated a variety of regulations, price controls, industrial subsidies, and restrictions on foreign investment, lowered tariff barriers, privatized virtually all of the country’s state enterprises (including the pension system and the petroleum sector), and launched a state restructuring program that would cut nearly seven hundred thousand jobs from the federal bureaucracy” (Levitsky 2003: 145-146).

<sup>182</sup> For a discussion of Peronism’s traditionally statist orientation, see Levitsky (2003: 28-29).

<sup>183</sup> Quoted in Acuña (1998: 67).

Although, in hindsight, there were signs of the policy turnaround to come,<sup>184</sup> and it is very likely that Menem developed his plans for the economy well before the election,<sup>185</sup> the new president's transformation was nevertheless shocking to most Argentines. No one was more shocked than Álvaro Alsogaray, who in his memoir writes that Menem's embrace of the free market had been "until that moment unimaginable," and claims that he "did not have the slightest idea of the fundamental changes that Dr. Menem was about to implement" (Alsogaray 1993: 303-304, 162). Perhaps even more surprising than Menem's general policy shift was his decision to reach out specifically to Alsogaray, who had long denounced Peronism as "totalitarian" and "national socialist,"<sup>186</sup> and who, in reference to Menem, had once said "in a civilized country, he would not exist, he would not even be considered."<sup>187</sup> Yet, just days after the election, Menem invited Alsogaray to a meeting to discuss economic policy,<sup>188</sup> and asked him to draw up suggestions for an economic plan.<sup>189</sup> Shortly thereafter, Menem offered Alsogaray the position of Argentine ambassador to the United States,<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> These signs included reports that Menem was seeking advice from an-ex UCEDE leader, Manuel Mora y Araujo; persistent rumors that the liberal technocrat Domingo Cavallo was in the running to become Menem's economy minister; and a well-publicized meeting between Menem and UCEDE leader Alberto Albamonte a week and half before the May 1989 election. On these incidents, see "Un antiguo militante de la UCeDé asesora la campaña peronista," *Página/12*, 3 February 1989; "Domingo Cavallo: El aspirante a ministro de Menem," *Página/12*, 17 March 1989; and "Albamonte los mira con mucho cariño," *Página/12*, 4 May 1989. Also author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 12 May 2012.

<sup>185</sup> See Alsogaray (1993: 162) and Stokes (2001: 71).

<sup>186</sup> See, for example, Alsogaray (1993: 23, 243).

<sup>187</sup> Quoted in "Dinosaurios, dinámicos y un Oscar local de monetarismo," *Página/12*, 18 March 1989.

<sup>188</sup> See "Menem y Alsogaray analizaron la futura política económica," *La Nación*, 23 May 1989.

<sup>189</sup> See "El rol de Alsogaray: La UCeDé prepara ideas para Roig," *Somos*, 15 June 1989, and "Amor sin barreras," *Somos*, 21 June 1989.

<sup>190</sup> See "Menem le ofreció a Alsogaray la embajada en Estados Unidos," *Página/12*, 16 June 1989.

which he rejected to become special presidential adviser on economic matters.<sup>191</sup> While he held little formal authority, Alsogaray became a sort of “minister without portfolio”<sup>192</sup> in the new government, and was widely thought to be the architect of its economic program.<sup>193</sup> Menem also appointed other UCEDE leaders to positions of authority, notably María Julia Alsogaray, who became head of the state-owned telephone company (with a mandate to privatize) and later environment minister.<sup>194</sup> This pattern of appointing high-profile UCEDE leaders to policymaking and administrative positions—though without, as discussed below, forging a formal pact with the actual UCEDE party apparatus<sup>195</sup>—was a hallmark of Menem’s first term, with “the economic policy-making institutions of the Peronist government of Carlos Menem bec[oming] a veritable revolving door of entering and exiting UCEDE appointees” (Gibson 1996: 180).<sup>196</sup> Menem also reached out to business, appointing as his first two economy ministers senior executives of Bunge y Born, “one of the most powerful Argentine multinational oligopolies” (Acuña 1995: 27).

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<sup>191</sup> See “Alsogaray rechazó ir como embajador a los EE.UU.,” *La Nación*, 17 June 1989; “Alsogaray, asesor de Menem: Los consejos del Viejo Vizcacha,” *Página/12*, 22 June 1989; and “Para Alsogaray, ha llegado el momento de jugarse con Menem,” *La Nación*, 25 June 1989.

<sup>192</sup> See “Segunda mano,” *Página/12*, 10 January 1990.

<sup>193</sup> See “Similitudes con el Plan 9 de Julio,” *La Nación*, 3 January 1990, and “Alsogaray promete nuevas medidas: ‘El plan es 90% mío,’ ” *Página/12*, 18 March 1990. See also Gibson (1996: 194).

<sup>194</sup> See “María J. Alsogaray será interventora en Entel,” *La Nación*, 24 June 1989, and “El aire era gratis: María Julia vuelve al Gobierno como secretaria de Medio Ambiente,” *Página/12*, 8 November 1991.

<sup>195</sup> As Gibson (1990: 216) puts it: “One of the most striking features of this alliance is the marginal role played by the party institutions themselves. Parties have not been a prominent part [of] Menem’s political alliances, and the UCEDE-Peronist combination reflects the President’s preferred *modus operandi*. This is an alliance based on personal pacts between Menem and Alsogaray’s entourage; it is consummated by the participation of UCEDE-affiliated *técnicos* at all levels of the executive branch. It was forged and implemented in complete isolation from the formal leaderships of either party” (Gibson 1990: 216).

<sup>196</sup> For a full list of UCEDE members appointed during Menem’s government, see Gibson (1996: 206-209).

Why did Menem decide to incorporate UCEDE leaders into his government, and what did they accept? Menem's primary motive seems to have been the pursuit of credibility. During the 1989 election, the prospect of a Menem presidency had been considered so horrifying to elites that some had publicly mused about the possibility of emigrating if he were elected.<sup>197</sup> In order to win over these sectors and convince them that he was serious about abandoning his campaign promises and decades of Peronist tradition, Menem would have to send "an unambiguous political signal" (Schamis 1999: 263). Appointing UCEDE leaders, who came from the country's largest conservative party and were unmistakably committed to the free market, would serve as precisely such a signal. As one leftist congresswoman said of María Julia Alsogaray's appointment as head of the state telephone company, it was "like assigning Herod to babysit,"<sup>198</sup> in reference to the biblical tyrant known for killing children. In the words of one prominent former UCEDE leader, she was chosen partially for her "symbolic value," since she was "someone who really symbolized privatizations... someone who had spent the whole campaign talking about privatization."<sup>199</sup> The appointment of Bunge y Born executives had a similar effect. These appointments were freighted with symbolism, since Bunge y Born was not merely a large corporation, but a "staunch adversary of Peronism" (Schamis 1999: 263) and a company that, by Menem's own

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<sup>197</sup> See Shirley Christian, "Buenos Aires Journal; Tango With Peronist? Who's Afraid?," *The New York Times*, 4 July 1989.

<sup>198</sup> Quoted in Shirley Christian, "Buenos Aires Journal; Tango With Peronist? Who's Afraid?," *The New York Times*, 4 July 1989.

<sup>199</sup> Author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 26 June 2012.



admission, was symbolic of “the capitalist beast.”<sup>200</sup> There was only one way to read such appointments: Menem was serious about liberalizing the economy.<sup>201</sup>

If Menem’s motive in appointing UCEDE leaders to positions of authority was primarily symbolic, the motive of UCEDE leaders in accepting those positions was more practical: it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to carry out their program instead of simply nagging on the political sidelines. The reason that it was such an extraordinary opportunity was that Menem’s economic program, strongly influenced by Alsogaray himself, was nearly identical to that of the UCEDE.<sup>202</sup> While Menem preferred to describe his program in terms of the “popular market economy” rather than the “social market economy,” the term traditionally used by free-market advocates in Latin America, this was a semantic rather than a substantive distinction. As Alsogaray explained, with remarkable candor, in January 1990 during a televised address to explain Menem’s economic policies:<sup>203</sup>

For more than thirty years I have represented a line of thinking in Argentina that in these moments is coinciding with the economic policies implemented by this government... What we are witnessing are not minor repairs. It is not a band-aid approach. It is a total change of the system... What the president [Menem] intends to do is to change this system down to the roots and evolve to what he calls a ‘popular market economy.’ This is what I have always called a ‘social market economy.’ It is the same thing.

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<sup>200</sup> Quoted in Shirley Christian, “Inflation Unites Peronists and Argentine Business,” *The New York Times*, 7 August 1989. As the article notes: “There was a time when the followers of the political movement created more than four decades ago by Juan D. Peron [*sic*] thought primarily of Bunge & Born as they marched through the streets singing about combating capitalism.”

<sup>201</sup> According to Gibson (1996: 193), in reaching out to both the UCEDE and the business sector, Menem was pursuing a “two-track strategy,” which “was needed for building support among Argentina’s socioeconomic elite: Alvaro Alsogaray mobilizing the confidence of his affluent and influential electorate, and Argentina’s most important industrial concern in charge of the Economics Ministry to guarantee business support.”

<sup>202</sup> According to Gibson (1996: 196), Menem’s economic program was “the UCEDE’s own preelection platform.” See also “Alsogaray promete nuevas medidas: ‘El plan es 90% mío,’ ” *Página/12*, 18 March 1990.

<sup>203</sup> Quoted in Gibson (1996: 194). For the full text of this speech, see “Alsogaray: estamos abandonando el estatismo y el intervencionismo,” *La Nación*, 3 January 1990. For an essay by Alsogaray on the nature of the “popular market economy,” see “La economía popular de mercado,” *La Nación*, 3 September 1989.

This was simply too good of an opportunity to pass up. As Alsogaray (1993: 304) explained in his memoir: “[T]he presidential decision to adopt liberal policies and offer us participation in the execution of those policies obligated us...to support the change being projected... [I]t was clear that those of us who had struggled for more than three decades to put into practice liberal ideas, and who were now [being] offered the opportunity to participate practically in this task, could not reject this offer.” Obviously, Alsogaray would have preferred to be the one enacting those reforms as president rather than having to depend on a reconstructed Peronist. Yet this was a fantasy; the UCEDE was simply too small to win office. As Alsogaray is reported to have said to a group of UCEDE members skeptical of his decision to support the new Peronist president: “*Señores*, enough irony. When were we going to have [the] six or eight million votes [needed] to apply our ideas?”<sup>204</sup>

The Menem government had paradoxical effects on the UCEDE: it led to the implementation of many of its most cherished policies, but simultaneously triggered its death as a party. There were two reasons why Menem’s turn to neoliberalism was so damaging to the UCEDE’s prospects as a party. First, because Menem’s government was carrying out much of the party’s program, the UCEDE essentially “lost its reason to exist as a political organization” (Gutiérrez 1992: 122).<sup>205</sup> Second, and perhaps even more significantly, there was good reason to believe that Menem was not simply a Peronist aberration, but instead represented a permanent transformation of the Peronist Party into a conservative party.

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<sup>204</sup> Quoted in Gutiérrez (1992: 11).

<sup>205</sup> The result, as Alsogaray (1993: 304-305) notes in his memoir, was paradoxical: “[M]any members and supporters considered the objectives of the party to have been achieved, at least in the ideological domain, and thus it was no longer necessary to sacrifice and take action in order to advance our ideas... In this way a paradox was produced, in which just as the ideas of the party were triumphing in the country and when the new government was turning fully to them, the electoral support of the UCEDE shrank.”

Like all conservative parties, this hypothetical new version of Peronism would have an upper-class core constituency but would retain Peronism's mass electoral base. Gibson (1996: 203) described this scenario as "the conservatization of populism."<sup>206</sup> In retrospect, it seems fanciful, given the left-leaning orientation of Peronist presidents Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-present). At the time, however, it seemed possible. Not only had Menem committed himself to an ideologically right-wing program and gone to great lengths to incorporate high-profile figures from the UCEDE and business into his government, but he had also indicated that this was the direction he planned to take Peronism in the longer term. He did so by having the Peronist Party join the UPLA, the regional club for right-leaning parties discussed above.<sup>207</sup> This meant that the Peronist Party became part of an international association that included all of the four major conservative parties examined in this study—Argentina's UCEDE, Chile's UDI, El Salvador's ARENA and Guatemala's PAN—as well as other prominent conservative parties, such as Chile's RN, Brazil's PFL/Democrats and Bolivia's ADN. If the appointment of figures such as Álvaro and María Julia Alsogaray to positions of authority signaled what Menem planned to do during his government, it was not unreasonable to assume that the decision to join the UPLA was indicative of his plans for the Peronist Party—that is, to transform it, permanently, into a conservative party.

In response to Menem's economic reforms and the possibility of Peronism being transformed into a conservative party, both voters and party leaders defected from the

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<sup>206</sup> For a discussion of the "conservatization of populism" scenario in Argentina, see Gibson (1996: 198-204).

<sup>207</sup> See "Argentina" on the website of the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation, a right-leaning German foundation that works closely with the UPLA: [www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se/argentina-en/](http://www.hjalmarsonfoundation.se/argentina-en/). Accessed on 4 June 2014. Also author's interviews with UPLA director, and with representative of the Hanns Seidel Stiftung in Chile, 18 May 2012.

UCEDE in droves. The result was that “[t]he Peronist president...simply swallowed the conservative party [UCEDE], its very existence having lost all purpose” (Borón 2000: 159). The first sign that there was a risk of the UCEDE’s electorate abandoning the party in favor of Menem’s version of Peronism came in April 1990, when a mass rally in Buenos Aires’ Plaza de Mayo brought together over 100,000 people in support of Menem’s economic reforms.<sup>208</sup> Mass Peronist rallies were hardly unique; what *was* unique about this rally was its composition, which brought “together two disparate elements: poor, nonunionized Peronist supporters and affluent city dwellers attending their first Peronist rally” (Gibson 1996: 199). The presence of the latter was virtually unprecedented, given that Peronism had long been the bugbear of Argentine elites. One newspaper article referred to such individuals as “*justicieras*,” a portmanteau of the words “*liberales*” and “*justicialistas*” (as Peronists are officially known), and the evidence suggests that they abandoned the UCEDE in favor of Peronism in large numbers.<sup>209</sup> In his statistical analysis of voting patterns between 1989 and 1993, Gibson (1996: 200-201) finds that there was a powerful correlation between decline in support for the UCEDE and rise in support for Peronism:

In the city of Buenos Aires, the Peronist Party [PJ] was the primary beneficiary of the UCEDE’s electoral collapse... Electoral data indicate that the PJ’s growth between 1989 and 1993 was due, not to its traditional constituencies in the lower social strata, but to the addition of upper-income voters to its electoral coalition... These results reveal a striking association between the UCEDE’s decline and the Peronist Party’s growth, as well as a clearly positive association between social status and PJ growth. They suggest that important segments of the UCEDE’s core constituencies shifted their support to the PJ during this period.

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<sup>208</sup> See “En Plaza de Mayo, el peronismo le da la bienvenida al capital,” *Página/12*, 5 April 1990; “Hombre rico, hombre pobre: Una heterogénea multitud colmó la Plaza de Mayo,” *Página/12*, 7 April 1990; and “Después de la plaza qué,” *Somos*, 11 April 1990.

<sup>209</sup> See “Votos del menemismo: Con aportes liberales,” *Página/12*, 1 December 1991.

In short, one of the reasons that the Menem government constituted a “mortal wound” (Gutiérrez 1992: 12) for the UCEDE was that it absorbed much of its voter base.

In addition to poaching many of the UCEDE’s voters, Menem also convinced many of the UCEDE’s leaders to resign from the party and formally join the ranks of Peronism. Although there had been UCEDE leaders in Menem’s government from the beginning, they maintained their party affiliation and emphasized that their loyalty was to Menem’s package of economic reforms, not to Peronism, which they continued to find distasteful. As Álvaro Alsogaray explained in a 1990 interview: “[A]n emotional union with Peronism is very difficult for us. We cannot call ourselves Peronists as long as Peronism does not renounce a past that we cannot by any means approve of. And that they will not do.”<sup>210</sup> Alsogaray maintained this position; he never embraced Peronism, and he in fact grew more distant from Menem over time, eventually resigning from his government in January 1991.<sup>211</sup> Other UCEDE leaders, however, did not find themselves hampered by any emotional aversion to Peronism. In December 1993, after the UCEDE’s extremely poor performance in the October legislative election, several high-profile UCEDE leaders defected from the party and officially became Peronists.<sup>212</sup> In a well-publicized event heavy with Peronist symbolism and with Menem himself in attendance, these liberal leaders proclaimed enthusiastic support for their new party. The most flamboyant of all was Adelina Dalesio de Viola, who declared:

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<sup>210</sup> Quoted in Gibson (1996: 202-203).

<sup>211</sup> See “Otra renuncia: Alsogaray abandona el barco,” *Página/12*, 15 January 1991.

<sup>212</sup> See “Adelina y Pirra al PJ: El comienzo del éxodo liberal,” *Página/12*, 17 November 1993; “Alsogaray y el éxodo ucedeísta: ‘Son semillas de maldad,’ ” *Página/12*, 21 November 1993; “Unos se van, otros dudan: Adiós UCeDé, adiós,” *Página/12*, 27 November 1993; “Adelina y Pirra firman hoy sus pases al PJ: Cambio de ramo,” *Página/12*, 7 December 1993; “Adelina de Viola consumó su pase, enamorada del peronismo,” *La Nación*, 8 December 1993; and “Me he enamorado de él,” *Página/12*, 8 December 1993.

“I am marrying *Justicialismo* [Peronism] because I have fallen in love with it.”<sup>213</sup> In short, Menem’s version of Peronism absorbed not only much of the UCEDE’s electoral base, but also some of its most prominent leaders.<sup>214</sup> The result was party collapse.

Why was the UCEDE not better able to cope with the challenge presented by Menem’s government—or even profit from it politically, given Menem’s popularity with the electorate?<sup>215</sup> I argue that this was due to lack of authoritarian inheritance, which contributed to the party’s downfall in two ways. First, because the UCEDE did not benefit from a strong source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle, it was not able to respond to Menem’s overture in a unified and coherent manner. As discussed above, the UCEDE had long been characterized by vicious infighting, with repeated attempts to overthrow Álvaro Alsogaray as party president. This process reached its peak in the days after the 14 May 1989 general election. Although the party had had its best electoral performance to date, it nevertheless fell far short of expectations. Immediately after the election, an intense process of “self-criticism” began, with party members looking for someone to blame.<sup>216</sup> The person who came under the heaviest fire was María Julia Alsogaray, who had been the primary architect of the Alliance of the Center coalition, which many in the UCEDE deemed to have been a failure, and one of the main organizers of the

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<sup>213</sup> Quoted in “Me he enamorado de él,” *Página/12*, 8 December 1993.

<sup>214</sup> In 1991, María Julia Alsogaray also resigned from the UCEDE. See “La partida de María Julia: Final de fiesta,” *Página/12*, 1 October 1991. However, she never joined the Peronist Party (Gibson 1996: 201).

<sup>215</sup> Despite pursuing an economic program that was the opposite of what he had promised on the campaign trail in 1989, Menem’s reforms, which succeeded in ending hyperinflation, initially enjoyed widespread support, and he was easily reelected in 1995. For one explanation of this popular support, see Weyland (1998).

<sup>216</sup> See “Ucedé: coinciden en la necesidad de una severa autocritica,” *La Nación*, 16 May 1989.

election campaign, which she was accused of mismanaging.<sup>217</sup> Yet, attacks on María Julia Alsogaray were also, implicitly, attacks on Álvaro Alsogaray, who had a history of shielding and promoting his daughter's advancement within the party.<sup>218</sup> Soon UCEDE authorities were openly considering proposals to remove Álvaro Alsogaray as party president,<sup>219</sup> and on 10 June 1989, he officially resigned his position.<sup>220</sup> One of the reasons he cited for his resignation was that “struggles within the party ha[d] been unleashed that exceeded the bounds of reasonability for serious and responsible political action that the public had expected of us.”<sup>221</sup> Alsogaray was replaced as party president by Federico Clérico, a congressman from the Province of Buenos Aires who had made common cause with Adelina Dalesio de Viola and other “renovators” within the UCEDE.<sup>222</sup> By the time the dust had settled, the most important party posts had passed from Alsogaray and his supporters to the rebellious leaders who had long contested his leadership.<sup>223</sup>

This internal reshuffling could not have come at a worse time. At precisely the moment that UCEDE leaders were forcing the resignation of Alsogaray, Menem was reaching out to him. This created an extraordinarily awkward situation for the new UCEDE

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<sup>217</sup> See “UCEDE: Apunten contra María Julia,” *Página/12*, 17 May 1989, and “Ucedé: la diputada Alsogaray fue el blanco de las críticas,” *La Nación*, 21 May 1989.

<sup>218</sup> Álvaro Alsogaray's seemingly nepotistic support for his daughter had long been a source of tension within the UCEDE. For example, prior to the November 1985 legislative election, he used his influence to put her at the top of the party's ticket, even though she was not an UCEDE founder and had limited support within the party (Domán and Olivera 1989: 53-58). See also “No toquen a la nena,” *Página/12*, 24 February 1989.

<sup>219</sup> See “La Ucedé analizará las elecciones y un pedido de remoción de Alsogaray,” *La Nación*, 20 May 1989.

<sup>220</sup> See “UCeDÉ: renunció Alvaro Alsogaray,” *Clarín*, 11 June 1989.

<sup>221</sup> Quoted in “UCeDÉ: renunció Alvaro Alsogaray,” *Clarín*, 11 June 1989.

<sup>222</sup> See Gutiérrez (1992: 99) and Gibson (1996: 191).

<sup>223</sup> See Gutiérrez (1992: 99) and Gibson (1996: 191).

authorities. In the best of circumstances, deciding how to position the party vis-à-vis the Menem government would have presented a dilemma.<sup>224</sup> Now there was an additional dilemma: how should the party position itself vis-à-vis Alsogaray, its recently deposed president, as he became a key adviser to President Menem? The path chosen was highly self-destructive. Rather than attempting to negotiate a formal pact or governing arrangement with Menem, the UCEDE's authorities declared that the party would "not co-govern,"<sup>225</sup> and announced a position of "opposition"<sup>226</sup> to the new government. Álvaro Alsogaray and his followers, predictably, ignored the party's official stance, which led to highly public mudslinging<sup>227</sup> and resulted in an untenable situation: on the one hand, the UCEDE proclaimed its opposition to the Menem government; on the other, the Menem government was carrying out the UCEDE's program and was staffed by several of its historic leaders.<sup>228</sup> The situation became even more untenable in June 1990, when Alsogaray was elected president of the UCEDE in the City of Buenos Aires,<sup>229</sup> meaning that the

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<sup>224</sup> Even Alsogaray (1993: 304) admits in his memoir that Menem's turn to neoliberalism "put the UCEDE in a dilemma," though he argues that the benefits of supporting Menem's reforms outweighed the costs. In his words: "On the one hand, the presidential decision to adopt liberal policies and offer us participation in the execution of those policies obligated us, whatever doubts we might have had about the matter, to support the change being projected. On the other hand, this blurred to a certain extent the party, or at least it weakened it as [the political force] 'spearheading' the rehabilitation of the country" (Alsogaray 1993: 304). See also "Ser o no ser gobierno: El dilema liberal," *Página/12*, 11 March 1990.

<sup>225</sup> See "Cléríci dijo que la Ucedé no cogobernará," *La Nación*, 25 June 1989. See also "La Ucedé intenta borrar la imagen de que cogobierna," *La Nación*, 31 December 1989.

<sup>226</sup> See "Cléríci advirtió que la Ucedé no renunciará a su papel opositor," *La Nación*, 20 June 1989.

<sup>227</sup> See, for example, "Cléríca fustiga a Alvaro Alsogaray," *Clarín*, 7 September 1989; "Réplicas a críticas de Cléríci: Alsogaray también cree que el silencio es salud," *La Nación*, 8 September 1989; "La relación Menem-Alsogaray divide a la Ucedé," *La Nación*, 21 January 1990; "Alsogaray al ataque," *Página/12*, 28 March 1990; and "En la UCeDé, 'la familia' le declaró la guerra a Cléríci," *Página/12*, 29 March 1990.

<sup>228</sup> As Gibson (1996: 194) explains, this led to a situation in which there was "a division in the UCEDE between *el poder formal* [formal power], held by the party's top officeholders, and *el poder real* [real power], held by Alsogaray and the UCEDE leaders who had accompanied him into the government."

<sup>229</sup> See "Escoba en mano, Alsogaray pondrá orden en la UCeDé," *Página/12*, 19 June 1990.



president of the UCEDE at the national level (Clérici) and the president of the UCEDE in the party's stronghold of Buenos Aires (Alsogaray) held contradictory positions. The situation became worse still as party leaders' positions began to crisscross, with Alsogaray becoming less close to Menem,<sup>230</sup> and Adelina Dalesio de Viola, who was initially opposed to collaborating with the Peronist president, suddenly accepting a position in his government.<sup>231</sup> The result was that, as one newspaper put it, "it was never very clear whether the UCeDé was presenting itself as an opponent or ally of the government."<sup>232</sup> Given its incoherent stance toward the Menem government and its endless infighting, it is no wonder that many voters abandoned the UCEDE in the 1990s after Menem's turn to neoliberalism.

The second way that lack of authoritarian inheritance contributed to the UCEDE's downfall was by depriving it of the tools for early electoral success (e.g., a popular brand, clientelistic networks), which in turn increased incentives for party leaders and voters to abandon it in favor of a more realistic option. While it is true that the UCEDE experienced rapid growth, generated much hype and had a significant impact on policy debates, a simple fact remains: it was never a big party. In its debut election in 1983, it won a mere 1.6 percent

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<sup>230</sup> In January 1991, Alsogaray resigned from the Menem government, citing disagreements over various issues. While he continued to support the broad direction of Menem's economic policy, he was critical of other aspects of the Menem government, such as the president's reform of the constitution in order to permit reelection. In short, Alsogaray became more distant from the president—especially in comparison to other UCEDE leaders, who not only entered his government but also, in some cases, joined the Peronist Party. See Gutiérrez (1992: 109-110). See also "Otra renuncia: Alsogaray abandona el barco," *Página/12*, 15 January 1991, and "El plebiscito es una idea inviable: Alsogaray no votará la reforma," *Página/12*, 29 October 1993.

<sup>231</sup> As part of the faction that overthrew Álvaro Alsogaray, she was initially aligned with those critical of the UCEDE leaders who had chosen to support the Menem government. In August 1991, however, she surprised many by accepting a position in the government, first as the undersecretary of the interior, and later as president of the publicly-owned *Banco Hipotecario Nacional*. See "El pase de Adelina hace olas en la interna liberal," *Página/12*, 24 August 1991, and "Adelina de Viola, en el Banco Hipotecario," *La Nación*, 2 February 1993. The UCEDE lost another high-profile opponent of the Menem government when Federico Clérici died unexpectedly in January 1993. See "Murió el diputado Federico Clérici," *La Nación*, 1 February 1993.

<sup>232</sup> See "La UCeDé tuvo su primera sesión de terapia," *Página/12*, 17 September 1991.

of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies, and Alsogaray's presidential candidacy was so hopeless that, in his own words, it was "practically symbolic" (Alsogaray 1993: 300). In subsequent elections, the UCEDE saw its vote share increase, yet its most salient electoral characteristic—its smallness—was never fundamentally altered. Moreover, the party's electoral support was always highly geographically concentrated, with the vast majority of its votes coming from the greater metropolitan area of Buenos Aires.<sup>233</sup> As Borón (2000: 159) puts it: "Despite the initial enthusiasm that the foundation of the UCeDé created at the very beginning of the Alfonsín government, the fact is that this party barely managed to become a national organization even at the zenith of its short life" (Borón 2000: 159). Indeed, in the 1989 election for Chamber of Deputies, the UCEDE's fourth election and the one in which it experienced its best-ever performance, the party won only 9.9 percent of the vote;<sup>234</sup> by contrast, Chile's UDI won 9.8 percent in its *first* election (also, incidentally, in 1989), and then saw its vote share increase dramatically in subsequent elections.

In theory, being born small need not have damned the UCEDE to failure. The party's electoral trajectory was clearly upward, and thus it might have continued to grow until it consolidated as a case of successful party-building. Yet the fact that the UCEDE was still so small after four elections no doubt made it seem like a quixotic enterprise to many of the party's leaders and supporters. Even before the 1989 election, there was speculation about defections from the party if the UCEDE had a mediocre performance, particularly if it won

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<sup>233</sup> As mentioned previously, "over 90% of [the UCEDE's vote] total was concentrated in the Buenos Aires region" (Gibson 1990: 183). See also Borón (2000: 159).

<sup>234</sup> Moreover, this 9.9 percent was the amount won by the entire Alliance of the Center, though it appears that the smaller provincial parties contributed little to the coalition's overall performance. See "UCEDE: Apunten contra María Julia," *Página/12*, 17 May 1989. Also author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 26 June 2012.

less than 10 percent.<sup>235</sup> While some took a more realistic and long-term view,<sup>236</sup> others were far less patient. After Menem turned to neoliberalism and signaled the possibility of Peronism transforming into a conservative party, it became increasingly difficult to convince those impatient for change to stick with the UCEDE.<sup>237</sup> Ultimately, many seem to have concluded that if they wanted to support Menem's reforms, it made more sense to support Menem's own large, national and electorally successful party than a small, geographically concentrated and electorally weak one that could not even decide whether it supported or opposed the government. As one prominent UCEDE leader put it when asked why she eventually decided to defect to Peronism: "Because Menem was doing for my country what we [UCEDE] never could have done."<sup>238</sup> In the end, the choice that such figures made can be summarized in terms of two different models of conservative party-building. Adelina Dalesio de Viola, the UCEDE leader who eventually crossed over and declared herself to be "in love" with Peronism, claims that she once had a conversation in the early 1980s with

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<sup>235</sup> See "Los liberales se desparraman si son menos del diez por ciento," *Página/12*, 20 April 1989. UCEDE leaders had actually hoped for a far better performance than 10 percent. See also Gibson (1990: 177-178).

<sup>236</sup> In a 1988 interview, one young UCEDE leader offered a frank assessment of the party's strength and prospects, arguing that in the short term it was not realistic to shoot for national office, but that it was possible to win power at the university and municipal levels. As he explained: "In terms of structural issues, in order to govern, a political party needs, at the national level and to cover the provinces and municipalities that one is called on to govern by the will of the people, around 1000 politicians. We do not believe that we are in a position, from the point of view of the number of politicians that we have, to do so today. We are sure that in '95, with the level of growth in the leadership, that it will be a party in a position to govern the entire country. We already consider ourselves ready to govern some entities, like the Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires and the University. In this latter case, liberalism has a real possibility in March 1990 of reaching, democratically, the presidency of the University" (Juan Curutchet, quoted in Braun 1988: 248).

<sup>237</sup> In the lead-up to the 1991 legislative election, one newspaper wrote that the challenge the UCEDE faced was to convince voters that it was "more *Menemista* than the PJ [Peronist Party]," and that "in order to consolidate the [economic] stability obtained by the *justicialista* [Peronist] government of Carlos Menem, they should vote not for *justicialismo* [Peronists] but instead for *liberalismo* [UCEDE]." See "Los liberales quieren demostrar que son más menemistas que el PJ," *Página/12*, 30 August 1991. This would have been a hard sell in the best of circumstances, and it was even harder given the UCEDE's incoherent position toward Menem.

<sup>238</sup> Author's interview with former national UCEDE leader, 16 April 2012.

Domingo Cavallo, Menem's future economy minister, in which they discussed two possibilities for the Argentine right: "either we liberalize a popular party, or we popularize a liberal party."<sup>239</sup> During the 1980s, UCEDE leaders such as Dalesio de Viola had hoped to popularize a liberal party. They made some progress toward this goal; nevertheless, by the end of the 1980s, the UCEDE was still a relatively small party. Given the smallness of the UCEDE and the seeming transformation of Peronism under Menem's leadership, many appear to have calculated that the former option, liberalizing a popular party, was simply more realistic. This calculation, along with the UCEDE's incoherent response to the Menem government—both of which, I have argued, were rooted in the absence of authoritarian inheritance—explains the UCEDE's collapse.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the UCEDE, a case of failed conservative party-building. I argued that its failure, paradoxically, was rooted in its strong democratic credentials. Unlike Chile's UDI, an authoritarian successor party that inherited valuable resources from that country's most recent military regime, the UCEDE began its life with very limited stocks of starting political capital. While the UDI could hit the ground running, the UCEDE had to start from scratch. The UDI was born with a popular brand, clientelistic networks, a strong territorial organization, business connections and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle, which helped it to thrive under democracy from its very first election. The UCEDE was born with none of these things. While it made some

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<sup>239</sup> Quoted in "Adelina Dalesio de Viola y sus metas: madre y presidente," *Noticias*, 2 February 1990. See also Gibson (1996: 206).

progress during the 1980s in overcoming the disadvantaged conditions of its birth, it was never a particularly strong party. When President Carlos Menem, a reconstructed Peronist, reached out to some of the UCEDE's top leaders—but not, crucially, to the party itself—and began to implement neoliberal reforms, the UCEDE experienced a “Pyrrhic ideological victory” (Borón 2000: 160). Much of its program was implemented, but at the cost of the party itself. The UCEDE, perennially divided, could not decide how to position itself vis-à-vis the Menem government. In the short term, the result was ugly infighting and an incoherent posture toward the new government; in the longer term, it was voter disenchantment, party schism and ultimately collapse. While some in the UCEDE had believed that Peronism would transform permanently into a conservative party, this hope was dashed in the early 2000s. After Argentina's economic crisis in the early 2000s, Peronism experienced yet another ideological about-face. During the Peronist presidencies of Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-present), Peronism took on a left-wing orientation that was utterly different from *Menemismo*.

The UCEDE was not the only attempt at conservative party-building that would occur in post-third-wave Argentina. There have been three other major attempts, the third of which is ongoing. The first, Action for the Republic, was created by Menem's former finance minister, Domingo Cavallo, in 1997, and enjoyed a strong performance in the 1999 general election, winning 8.0 percent of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies. In 2001, however, it won a mere 1.3 percent, and then disappeared.<sup>240</sup> The second, Recreate for Growth, was created by economist and former Radical minister Ricardo López Murphy in 2002, and also enjoyed a burst of relative success, winning 6.2 percent in the 2005 election

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<sup>240</sup> On Action for the Republic, see Levitsky (2000: 56, 60, 63) and Murillo and Calvo (2013: 135-136).

for Chamber of Deputies.<sup>241</sup> Like Action for the Republic, however, its electoral performance quickly dwindled. The third, Republican Proposal (PRO), was created by businessman and mayor of the City of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri, in 2010.<sup>242</sup> Like the UCEDE, Action for the Republic and Recreate for Growth, the PRO has experienced some electoral success, winning 6.7 percent of the vote in the 2013 election for the Chamber of Deputies. While it is too soon to know whether the PRO will succeed or not, so far it seems likely to follow in the UCEDE's footsteps: it is relatively small and its support is geographically concentrated in the City of Buenos Aires. All four of these parties illustrate the severe challenges of conservative party-building in the absence of authoritarian inheritance. While this chapter has focused on the UCEDE, its findings also appear to generalize to more recent cases of failed party-building in Argentina.

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<sup>241</sup> On Recreate for Growth, see Murillo and Calvo (2013: 135-136).

<sup>242</sup> On the PRO, see Morresi and Vommaro (2014).

## CHAPTER 6

### El Salvador's ARENA: Origins of an Authoritarian Successor Party

In the 1980s, El Salvador became the focus of intense interest for activists and policymakers worldwide. The main reason was the country's brutal civil war, which claimed the lives of over 70,000 people.<sup>1</sup> As leftist guerrillas took up arms against a repressive state and allied paramilitaries, the country fell into a vicious downward spiral. Nothing came to symbolize the horrors of El Salvador during this period as much as the so-called "death squads." While their precise nature was disputed, their actions were unambiguous: countless Salvadorans suspected of being "subversives" were abducted, tortured and murdered, with their mutilated bodies dumped in public spaces as a grisly warning to others. The man who became the public face of the "death squad" phenomenon was Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, the deputy director of intelligence during the previous military regime described by one former U.S. ambassador as a "pathological killer."<sup>2</sup> In September 1981, in preparation for an imminent transition to an electoral regime, D'Aubuisson formed a new party: the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA). Despite its founder's connection to the old regime and association with ongoing violence, in its debut election of March 1982, ARENA came in second place with nearly 30 percent of the vote, and in the following decades would never win less than that amount in a national election. ARENA is without a doubt the most successful new conservative party in Latin America; in fact, it is almost certainly the most successful new party of any kind. What explains ARENA's extraordinary success?

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<sup>1</sup> See Stanley (1996: 218) and Lehoucq (2012: 92).

<sup>2</sup> See Warren Hoge, "Salvadorans Vote Today in Election U.S. Calls Critical," *The New York Times*, 28 March 1982.

In this chapter and in Chapter 7, I examine the emergence of ARENA and provide an explanation for its success. I demonstrate that ARENA was an authoritarian successor party, and argue that it succeeded because of authoritarian inheritance. In this chapter, I examine the origins of ARENA, showing that it had roots in the pre-1979 military dictatorship, and that its founders were deeply involved in the explosion of “death squad” violence that rocked El Salvador in the 1980s. Because ARENA was founded by Roberto D’Aubuisson, a high-level incumbent of the previous dictatorship, it meets the definition of an authoritarian successor party. Yet ARENA was never the “official” party of the regime;<sup>3</sup> instead, like Chile’s UDI, its founders only turned to party-building after being sidelined from power in the wake of a palace coup in October 1979. As such, ARENA is an example of what I call an “inside-out” party. While ARENA did not embrace the old regime as explicitly as the UDI, and was not as much of a magnet for former regime insiders, I demonstrate that D’Aubuisson’s position in the old regime nevertheless allowed the party to benefit from several forms of authoritarian inheritance. These included a territorial organization, a well-known and popular party brand, business connections and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. As I argue in Chapter 7, these forms of authoritarian inheritance were decisive in allowing ARENA to succeed under democracy.

In order to trace the origins of ARENA, this chapter is structured as follows. In the first section, I examine the military dictatorship that dominated El Salvador from the 1930s until 1979, and discuss three regime entities that would later play an important role in the

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<sup>3</sup> As discussed below, the pre-1979 military regime in El Salvador actually had an “official” party, the Party of National Conciliation (PCN), which survived democratization. While politics from the early 1990s onward was dominated by two parties—ARENA and the leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN)—the PCN remained a significant “third” party. Its persistence is another illustration of the importance of authoritarian inheritance. The fact that its performance was so much weaker than that of ARENA, however, is puzzling. While not the main subject of this chapter, I address the causes of this disparity below.



history of ARENA: the Party of National Conciliation (PCN), the “official” party of the military regime; the Salvadoran National Security Agency (ANSESAL), a vast domestic intelligence apparatus whose deputy director was Roberto D’Aubuisson; and the Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN), a mass-based paramilitary and “para-political” group that would later provide ARENA with much of its territorial organization. In the second section, I discuss the October 1979 coup that put an end to the old regime and helped to unleash a civil war. I focus, in particular, on the leftist orientation of the first junta formed after the coup, and the reactions that this prompted from hard-line members of the security apparatus and economic elites. In the third section, I examine the figure of Roberto D’Aubuisson, who is inextricably linked to ARENA’s formation and success, and discuss his role in the “death squad” violence of the 1980s. In the fourth section, I examine the birth of ARENA, and argue that party formation was not D’Aubuisson’s first choice. It was only after the coup option was exhausted, in part due to pressure from the United States, that he turned to parties. I describe this path to conservative party formation as “no other way in,” the inverse of Goodwin’s (2001) “no other way out” theory of guerrilla formation. In the conclusion, I note the parallels between the origins of ARENA and Chile’s UDI, another “inside-out” party, before turning to the impact of authoritarian inheritance on ARENA’s success under democracy in Chapter 7.

### The “Protection Racket State”: A Long History of Military Rule

It is impossible to understand the rise of ARENA without also understanding El Salvador’s long history of authoritarianism, particularly after the onset of direct military rule

in the early 1930s. While much of Latin America oscillated between democracy and dictatorship during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, El Salvador had had virtually no experience with democracy prior to the onset of the third wave.<sup>4</sup> The country's history of authoritarianism was closely connected to the nature of its agriculture-based economy. Since the 1880s, El Salvador's economy had been based overwhelmingly on the production and export of coffee.<sup>5</sup> This crop was produced through what Barrington Moore (1966) famously called "labor-repressive" agriculture.<sup>6</sup> Depending on the place and historical period, labor-repressive agriculture can take forms ranging from slavery to debt peonage to violent union-busting. The common theme, however, is what Wood (2000b: 6-7) calls "extra-economic coercion," which "entails gross violations of fundamental liberal rights of association, speech, free movement, self-ownership, due process, and equality before the law." In El Salvador, most coffee production took place on large estates controlled by a small group of economic elites or "oligarchs,"<sup>7</sup> and relied on labor-repressive techniques. While peasants were not legally tied to the land as they were, for example, at some points in Guatemalan history, they were coerced through various methods, such as "the torture and disappearance of labor

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<sup>4</sup> As Wood (2000b: 77) notes: "El Salvador [was] not a case of re-democratization; there was no legacy of democratic institutions to draw on." See also Williams and Seri (2003: 303).

<sup>5</sup> For a classic account of the relationship between coffee and politics in Central America, see Paige (1997). For a discussion of the expansion of coffee production in the late nineteenth century in the isthmus, and how it contributed to authoritarian rule in countries such as El Salvador, see Mahoney (2001).

<sup>6</sup> Several authors have drawn on Moore's concept of "labor-repressive" agriculture in order to explain the long history of authoritarianism in El Salvador. See, for example, Stanley (1996: 25-26); Paige (1997: 7, 88-89); Wood (2000b); Mahoney (2001); and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006: 315).

<sup>7</sup> The small size and tightknit nature of El Salvador's "oligarchy" was captured by the popular expression "the fourteen families." Strictly speaking, the term was not accurate—there were more than fourteen powerful families in El Salvador—but it contained an element of truth. As Dunkerley (1982: 7) explains: "For the last century economic and political power in El Salvador have been concentrated in the hands of an oligarchy that has a good claim to be one of the smallest, most omnipotent, pugnacious and reactionary in the world. It is not, as popular opinion would have it, comprised solely of 'fourteen families,' although in the early years of the century it had a core of fourteen family groups with some 65 families in all. In 1974, 67 family firms exported coffee on a commercial scale while 37 enterprises dominated the production of coffee, sugar, and cotton."

activists and sometimes their families by death squads allied to state security forces and paramilitary groups, coercive workplace practices that long prevented any labor organizing, and close local alliances between landlords and representatives of the state that preempted political organization in the countryside” (Wood 2000b: 5).

In line with Moore’s (1966) findings, the existence of labor-repressive agriculture made democracy virtually impossible in El Salvador. As Wood (2000b: 7) explains, economic elites in societies that rely on labor-coercive agriculture have a strong incentive to prevent democratization: “Because the processes determining the distribution of income and wealth are underwritten by the political control of labor, the structure of these societies precludes fully democratic rule: in oligarchic societies these processes are such that the historical dread among elites—that rule by many would threaten the privileges of the few—cannot easily be allayed by Madisonian reassurances.” In El Salvador, this fear of the many translated into permanent authoritarian rule. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, this took the form of “traditional authoritarianism,” which followed “the classic patrimonial model in which maintenance of personal rule was the preeminent concern” (Mahoney 2001: 197, 137).<sup>8</sup> In this system, elections were held, but these were entirely pro forma and the victory of “the official candidate...was never in doubt” (Anderson 1971: 7).

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<sup>8</sup> Webre (1979: 4) offers a similar characterization: “Before 1931, the families that in effect owned the country also governed it. In those less complex times, the presidential chair was occupied by a succession of representatives of the Dueñas, Regalado, Escalón, and other wealthy families. This trend reached its ultimate expression under the Meléndez-Quinónez ‘dynasty.’ Carlos Meléndez (1912-1919) passed the presidency to his brother Jorge Meléndez (1919-1923) and in turn to his brother-in-law Alfonso Quinónez Molina (1923-1927).” Similarly, Anderson (1971: 7) notes: “One good thing about the Meléndez-Quinónez period was the absence of coups. But the reason for this was that the presidents were thorough-going dictators who ruled with an iron hand on behalf of a conservative aristocracy and the military.” To be sure, the country’s rulers made use of the military to maintain the existing political and economic system. Of particular importance was the National Guard, which was created in 1912 and served as a “national coercive apparatus to oversee order in the countryside” (Mahoney 2001: 136), especially in the coffee-growing areas of western El Salvador. Yet, despite the increasing role of the military in maintaining the status quo—a process that Mahoney (2001: 136) calls “state militarization”—civilians remained at the apex of the Salvadoran state until the 1930s.

In the early 1930s, two important events upset the existing political order and led to direct military rule. The first event was the January 1931 victory of Arturo Araujo, the candidate of the newly created Labor Party, in the first—and, for decades, only—relatively free and fair presidential election in Salvadoran history.<sup>9</sup> While himself a wealthy landowner, Araujo was a left-leaning reformer, earning himself the nickname the “Benefactor of the Working Class.”<sup>10</sup> In office, he attempted to carry out a “moderate social democratic program,” which included health and education benefits and “a limited land reform program based on government land purchases” (Paige 1997: 113, 111-112). The second event was the January 1932 Communist-led uprising of peasants and indigenous people in the western part of the country.<sup>11</sup> For a variety of reasons,<sup>12</sup> in late January 1932, thousands of peasants and indigenous people rose up, machetes in hand, and “took over several towns, overwhelmed isolated police posts, and indulged in looting, arson, and, in a few places, rape and murder” (Stanley 1996: 41). They targeted “symbols of local oppression,” such as “the wealthy and their homes, mayors, and municipal offices” (Stanley 1996: 41). While the Communists were the main formal organizer of the uprising, they had the support of many indigenous leaders, which meant that it was “at least as much an Indian rebellion as a

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<sup>9</sup> The reason that outgoing President Pío Romero Bosque (1927-1931) made the decision to choose his successor through a free and fair election is still debated by historians. For discussions of President Romero’s decision to hold a free election, the victory of Arturo Araujo in the 1931 election, and Araujo’s policies in office, see Anderson (1971: 40-63), Paige (1997: 110-112) and Stanley (1996: 45-48).

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Paige (1997: 110).

<sup>11</sup> For the definitive account of the peasant uprising and the massacre that followed, see Anderson (1971).

<sup>12</sup> There were many causes of the uprising, including a history of forced displacement from communal lands to make way for privately-owned coffee plantations, the daily indignities of labor-repressive agriculture, the economic suffering produced by the Great Depression and the firm commitment of Communist Party leader Farabundo Martí to the Third International, which at that time advocated “intensified class conflict and revolution and adopted a radical ‘class against class’ line that rejected any cooperation with the ‘social fascism’ of social democratic parties” (Paige 1997: 116).

Communist insurrection” (Paige 1997: 121). By all accounts, the uprising was poorly organized,<sup>13</sup> and the rebels did not accomplish any of their objectives. The extent of rebel violence was also quite limited: it is estimated that they killed approximately 35 civilians and local police (Stanley 1996: 41). Nevertheless, the uprising was terrifying for Salvadoran elites, since it “combined their two worst nightmares, Indian rebellion and Communist revolution” (Paige 1997: 121-122).<sup>14</sup>

Both experiments—the social democratic one of Arturo Araujo and the revolutionary one of the Communist-led insurrectionaries—were terminated by the military almost as soon as they began. In early December 1931, Araujo was overthrown in a coup, and replaced by his vice president, General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez. When the peasant uprising began less than two months later, Martínez<sup>15</sup> responded with such ferocity that the event is known simply as *La Matanza*—The Massacre.<sup>16</sup> In the ensuing weeks, thousands of people were killed. Farabundo Martí and other Communist Party leaders were publicly executed, and a general reign of terror against suspected “subversives” ensued. The exact number of people killed is unknown, but estimates range from 8,000 to 25,000 (Paige 1997: 103). If the higher estimates are accurate, over two percent of the entire Salvadoran population was killed (Paige 1997: 103). Indigenous people, in particular, were singled out

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<sup>13</sup> See Paige (1997: 118) and Stanley (1996: 51).

<sup>14</sup> According to Slater (2010), the intertwining of class and ethnic conflict is a particularly terrifying mix for elites and, as such, is the type of internal conflict most likely to trigger the construction of an “authoritarian Leviathan.”

<sup>15</sup> Although the convention in Spanish is to refer to individuals by their first surname (or both surnames), the general preferred to go by “Martínez” rather than “Hernández.”

<sup>16</sup> See Anderson (1971).

for punishment, and “[i]n some areas the *matanza* approached genocide, with the majority of the Indian population of some communities massacred” (Paige 1997: 121).

These events were to have long-lasting effects on Salvadoran politics, setting in place a pattern of elite-military collaboration that would last nearly half a century. By all accounts, “[t]he uprising and the subsequent massacre were the defining event in modern Salvadoran political history and in the construction of ruling elite ideology” (Paige 1997: 103). As Webre (1979: 8-9) puts it: “The revolt and its aftermath still hover like a brooding incubus over the collective consciousness of the Salvadoran political class.”<sup>17</sup> The fact that the Araujo social democratic experiment had been immediately followed by a full-blown attempt at revolution led elites to a stark conclusion: “From the point of view of the elite, reformists had created political space for opposition, and the result was a Communist-led rebellion. Thus most wealthy Salvadorans learned from the events of 1931 and 1932 that reformist and organized opposition opened the door to revolution” (Stanley 1996: 57). The product of the events of 1931-1932, then, was an intense and broadly construed anti-communism in which democracy, reformism and revolution became virtually synonymous, with each of them to be equally feared and resisted by any means necessary. In this way, the 1931-1932 period in El Salvador is analogous to the 1944-1954 period known as the “Ten Years of Spring” in Guatemala, which also combined democratic and reformist elements (see Chapter 8).

For the next five decades, El Salvador was a military dictatorship. Departing from the country’s tradition of civilian-led authoritarianism, the military assumed direct control of the state. At the heart of the new regime was a relationship between the military and economic elites that Stanley (1996: 6-7) famously described as a “protection racket,” in

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<sup>17</sup> Dunkerley (1982: 19) writes that a kind of “black myth” emerged around the event.

which “the military earned the concession to govern the country...in exchange for its willingness to use violence against class enemies of the country’s relatively small but powerful economic elite.”<sup>18</sup> Initially, military rule had a personalistic bent.<sup>19</sup> After becoming president through a coup in late 1931, General Martínez remained in power until 1944, when he too was forced from office. By 1948, however, military rule had become more institutionalized, with power exercised by the military as an institution rather than by a single military strongman.<sup>20</sup> Between 1948 and 1979, El Salvador was a true military *regime*, with relatively clear rules of the game for determining access to political office, the exercise of power and leadership succession. While there were occasional palace coups, both failed and successful, the regime was, by regional standards, remarkably stable for thirty years. As Mahoney (2001: 241) puts it: “Electoral-based military rule was so well institutionalized and provided such a consistent basis for political administration that one could argue that, with the exception of Costa Rica, El Salvador had the...most procedurally stable regime [in Central America].”

The 1948-1979 period of institutionalized military rule was built on two pillars: unfair elections and naked coercion. Regular elections were held for the presidency, the national legislature and municipal governments, and an informal “no reelection” rule for president ensured regular turnover in the country’s highest office (García 1989: 63). As described below, the military contested these elections with the use of an “official” party, initially called the Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification (PRUD), and later called the Party of

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<sup>18</sup> For a similar description, see Anderson (1988: 75).

<sup>19</sup> According to Mahoney (2001: 206), Martínez led a “personalistic regime,” and therefore his time in power “did not correspond with a situation of institutional military rule.”

<sup>20</sup> As White (1973: 196) puts it: “[T]he element of *caudillismo* almost completely disappeared from the political system with Martínez’s resignation.” See also Goodwin (2001: 157).

National Conciliation (PCN). While all elections were unfair, the degree of unfairness ranged from the utterly farcical to something approaching what Levitsky and Way (2010) call “competitive authoritarianism.” At one extreme was the 1956 general election, in which the military candidate for the presidency, Lieutenant Colonel José María Lemus, won 93 percent of the vote and the “official” party of the military won every seat in Congress (Dunkerley 1988: 353). During the 1960s and early 1970s, however, the regime began to liberalize, with elections becoming increasingly competitive. As Webre (1979: x) explains: “The feature which characterized this twelve-year period [1960-1972] in the minds of many observers in the United States was a political ‘liberalization’ that included a commitment on the part of the government to social and economic reform and to relatively free and open competition for power on the part of opposition parties.”<sup>21</sup>

The military regime’s main competitor in these elections from the 1960s onward was the Christian Democratic Party (PDC).<sup>22</sup> Formed in 1960, the PDC was a centrist<sup>23</sup> opposition party and was largely tolerated by the military authorities.<sup>24</sup> Given its explicit anti-communism (Webre 1979: 34) and generally non-threatening nature, the party was allowed to win a significant amount of seats in the legislature and to hold office at the municipal level. In 1964, the military allowed one of the PDC’s most important leaders, José Napoleón Duarte, to be elected mayor of the capital city, San Salvador, and by the late 1960s, some began to forecast “a possible trend toward a two-party system in El Salvador” (Webre

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<sup>21</sup> For more on these “years of optimism,” see Webre (1979: 69-105).

<sup>22</sup> On El Salvador’s Christian Democratic Party, see Webre (1979) and Williams and Seri (2003).

<sup>23</sup> On the PDC’s ideology, see Webre (1979: 51-68).

<sup>24</sup> According to one account, in the early 1960s, the military even offered to make the PDC the “official” party of the military regime (White 1973: 193).



1979: 103-104), consisting of the Christian Democrats and the military's "official" party, the PCN. Over time, however, the PDC began to overestimate the military's tolerance of opposition and to believe that it stood a serious chance of winning power under the existing rules of the game. It also softened its anti-communism somewhat, joining with social democrats and communists in the National Opposition Union (UNO) coalition in the 1972 presidential election, with Duarte as its candidate.<sup>25</sup> While most observers believe that Duarte won the election, he was denied victory through the use of gross fraud.<sup>26</sup> Thereafter, the liberalization of El Salvador's political system that seemed to be underway came to an end, and elections once again became an "obvious travesty" (Anderson 1988: 78). Nevertheless, the PDC continued to be seen as "the only viable electoral alternative to the military within a restricted sphere of electoral competition," and thus "became a sort of repository for opposition votes" (Williams and Seri 2003: 314) in future elections.

The other pillar of military rule was brute force. Following the "protection racket" scheme initiated in the early 1930s, the military authorities often used violence to protect elite interests: "[M]ilitary governments frequently found themselves under pressure from the landed elites to use greater violence to ensure control over land and labor. Just as Martínez had established his legitimacy with elites by means of the *matanza* and periodically reinforced his position through conspicuous 'protection' of elite interests, subsequent military governments found repression to be a crucial element of their formula for governing... Even governments that began with either economic reforms or political opening found they needed to use conspicuous repression to appease disgruntled civilian elites" (Stanley 1996:

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<sup>25</sup> UNO was composed of the Christian Democrats, the social democratic National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the National Democratic Union (UDN), which was a "Communist front" (Stanley 1996: 88).

<sup>26</sup> See Webre (1979: 141-183).

73). While coercive actions, such as “petty harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, physical abuse, and even murder,” had long been a fact of life for “members of society with little standing, such as fractious or uncooperative workers or peasants” (Webre 1979: 20), in the 1970s, state violence became more indiscriminate and began to take place on a much larger scale. After the 1972 election, for example, the military became much less tolerant of the Christian Democrats, and Duarte, the party’s presidential candidate, was “arrested, tortured, and shipped off to exile in Venezuela” (Anderson 1988: 77).<sup>27</sup> During the remainder of the 1970s, repression worsened and extended to groups that previously had been relatively unaffected by state violence, such as university students and Catholic priests, who now became legitimate targets for official harassment and even murder. One of the most notorious instances occurred in February 1977 when security forces opened fire on a crowd in San Salvador’s main square that was protesting alleged fraud in the most recent presidential election, killing approximately 200 protesters (Anderson 1988: 79).<sup>28</sup>

In order to maintain this curious blend of elections and repression, the military created several new entities. Three were particularly important. The first was an “official” political party. In the late 1940s, the military created the Revolutionary Party of Democratic Unification (PRUD), which became the Party of National Conciliation (PCN) in the early 1960s. The party was explicitly modeled on Mexico’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the organizational backbone of that country’s highly durable authoritarian regime for several

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<sup>27</sup> Duarte was the target of violence even before the 1972 election results were announced. During the electoral campaign, he survived an assassination attempt, though his driver was killed (Stanley 1996: 88).

<sup>28</sup> Similarly, in July 1975, the National Guard opened fire on thousands of university and secondary school students protesting against the amount of money being spent to host that year’s Miss Universe contest. At least 37 were killed, and several of the wounded were taken and subsequently “disappeared” (Stanley 1996: 96).

decades.<sup>29</sup> Colonel Óscar Osorio, who was president of El Salvador from 1950 to 1956 and who was instrumental in crafting institutional military rule, had previously lived in Mexico, where he had become an admirer of that country's system of party-based authoritarianism (Baloyra 1982: 37). In El Salvador, he sought to apply what he had learned by “imitat[ing] some PRI features such as a multiclass structure with the affiliation of peasants, middle-class organizations, and government-controlled workers” (Aguilar 1992: 320). The goal was to create “the kind of vertical integration of different classes and interest groups characteristic of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)” (Stanley 1996: 74). As in Mexico, El Salvador's rulers “made every attempt to confuse the concepts of party, government, and nation in the minds of the electorate” (Webre 1979: 20). Also, as in Mexico, there was never any real doubt at election time that candidates of the official party would win the presidency and the bulk of other nominally elective positions.

Yet the PRUD/PCN was no PRI.<sup>30</sup> While it served as the successful electoral vehicle for all of the military's presidential candidates between the early 1950s and late 1970s, it was largely a shell organization, lacking both a mass base and a permanent territorial organization. As Baloyra (1982: 35) explains:

The PRUD-PCN was not a mass party. It did not thrive on mobilizing the population, except to express support for government policies. The party did not have a permanent organizational structure; nor did it have much to do between elections. None of its deputies in the unicameral legislature or its municipal officials “elected” under the banner of the official party turned to it for guidance during his term of office. In reality, there was nothing to turn to: no party program or platform, no sectoral leadership to consult. While the official Salvadoran party incorporated public employees, retired military, and agricultural workers into its ranks, its de facto

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<sup>29</sup> On the influence of the PRI model in the formation of the PRUD/PCN, see White (1973: 167), Webre (1979: 20), Anderson (1988: 75, 131), Aguilar (1992: 320) and Stanley (1996: 74).

<sup>30</sup> On the practical differences between the Mexican PRI and the Salvadoran PRUD/PCN, see Webre (1979: 20), Baloyra (1982: 18-22), Aguilar (1992: 320) and Stanley (1996: 74).

leadership came from the High Command of the armed forces and high government officials.

While the Mexican PRI was a mass-based, permanent and encompassing organization with revolutionary credentials and clear supremacy over the military, the PRUD/PCN was a very different beast. In Stanley's (1996: 74) words: "The PRUD failed to achieve either the revolutionary legitimacy or the rural organizational structure that strengthened the Mexican Party... It never developed a permanent party structure, essentially disappearing between elections and leaving citizens with no local party mechanisms through which to channel their political views and demands." This half-baked nature, as will be argued in more detail below, helps to explain why the founders of ARENA opted to construct a new party rather than try to work through the old PCN. It also helps to explain why the PCN's electoral performance was relatively mediocre after the transition to democracy in the 1980s and 1990s.

The second important entity was the Salvadoran National Security Agency (ANSESAL).<sup>31</sup> As a military regime born in response to a Communist-led peasant uprising, the Salvadoran dictatorship was extremely concerned about keeping tabs on "subversive" activities within its borders. To this end, it maintained not only a vast repressive apparatus, but also a massive domestic spying program. After the beginning of the Cold War, and especially after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, intelligence-gathering became increasingly pervasive and there was a need to coordinate activities. In the early 1960s, under the leadership of General José Alberto Medrano, the commander of the National Guard, the regime created ANSESAL,<sup>32</sup> which was to serve as a "high-level clearing-house for

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<sup>31</sup> For descriptions of ANSESAL, see Pyes (1983: 6); Nairn (1984); McClintock (1985: 218-222); Anderson and Anderson (1986: 189-191); Arnson (2000: 93); LeoGrande (2000: 48-49); and Mazzei 2009: (146-149).

<sup>32</sup> The agency was originally called the National Intelligence Agency (SNI), but was renamed ANSESAL in the early 1970s (McClintock 1985: 219).

intelligence collected by subordinate agencies” (McClintock 1985: 218-219).<sup>33</sup> ANSESAL worked in close coordination with a companion entity (described below) called the Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN), which was a mass-based, grassroots organization whose tens of thousands of members served as informants. Headquartered in the presidential palace, ANSESAL was “the nerve centre of the combined intelligence networks of the security system, and in particular the co-ordinator of intelligence flowing in from the tens of thousands of ORDEN members” (McClintock 1985: 219). As investigative journalist Craig Pyes (1983: 6) explains, ANSESAL “functioned as the brain of a vast state security apparatus that reached into every town and neighborhood in the country,” and, “[b]y conservative estimate, at least one Salvadoran out of every 50 was an informant for the agency.” After 1971, when ANSESAL and ORDEN founder General Medrano was forced to retire following an intra-regime struggle, leadership of these organizations passed to his protégés. One of these protégés, as discussed below, was future ARENA founder Major Roberto D’Aubuisson, who in the late 1970s became the deputy director of ANSESAL, putting him near the top of the military regime’s security apparatus.

The third and, in terms of ARENA’s future development, most consequential entity created by the military regime was the Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> The United States played a significant role in the creation of ANSESAL and ORDEN. In General Medrano’s words: “ORDEN and ANSESAL...grew out of the State Department, the CIA, and the Green Berets during the time of Kennedy... We created these specialized agencies to fight the plans and actions of international communism” (quoted in Nairn 1984: 21). See also McClintock (1985).

<sup>34</sup> For discussions of ORDEN’s role in the old regime, see White (1973: 207); Armstrong and Shenk (1982: 77, 100-102); Dunkerley (1982: 75-77; 1988: 367-368); Cabarrús (1983); Pyes (1983: 8); Nairn (1984); McClintock (1985: 204-208, 218-222); Anderson and Anderson (1986: 189-191); Anderson (1988: 79); Americas Watch (1991: 4-5); Montgomery (1995: 55-56); Stanley (1996: 69-70, 81-82); Arnson (2000: 92); LeoGrande (2000: 48-49); Mazzei (2009: 146-147, 153-154); and Lindo-Fuentes and Ching (2012: 77-78).

ORDEN<sup>35</sup> was a mass-based, grassroots organization that engaged in a range of intelligence, paramilitary and political activities for the regime. Like ANSESAL, ORDEN was created in the 1960s under the leadership of General José Alberto Medrano. If ANSESAL was the brain of the military regime's intelligence apparatus, ORDEN was its body.<sup>36</sup> The new organization became a "nation-wide paramilitary network of informants... extend[ing] the intelligence services' reach to the grass-roots level" (McClintock 1985: 205). The goal of ORDEN was to provide the " 'eyes and ears' of the security systems at the grass roots [*sic*] level" (McClintock 1985: 66).<sup>37</sup> In this way, "ORDEN and ANSESAL functioned in tandem: intelligence collected by ORDEN was transmitted to ANSESAL, which kept elaborate files on alleged 'subversives.' In some cases, ANSESAL would direct ORDEN members to murder suspected dissidents; in others, the intelligence section of the National Guard or ANSESAL itself would dispatch special elite units (*especiales*) to do the killing" (LeoGrande 2000: 48-49). Much of ORDEN's membership was comprised of ex-military conscripts, who were recruited by ANSESAL to join the organization after completing military service (McClintock 1985: 219-220).<sup>38</sup> Estimates of ORDEN's membership vary, but most scholars agree on the figure of about 100,000 during the 1970s.<sup>39</sup> Considering that

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<sup>35</sup> The acronym ORDEN means "order" in Spanish.

<sup>36</sup> In one interview, Medrano referred to ORDEN members as "the body and bones of the army in the countryside" (quoted in Armstrong and Shenk 1982: 77).

<sup>37</sup> In Armstrong and Shenk's (1982: 77) words: "The National Guard had its own little gestapo in every village, organized as the Democratic Nationalist Organization—but more commonly referred to as ORDEN."

<sup>38</sup> In theory, ORDEN membership was voluntary, but in practice it seems to have been semi-mandatory. As one ORDEN member explained in 1978: "I'll be frank that they didn't ask me or many of the other members if we wanted to belong to ORDEN. I don't know how they found my name, but the truth is that one day the departmental governor brought me the registration list and a membership card" (quoted in Armstrong and Shenk 1982: 100).

<sup>39</sup> See Dunkerley (1988: 367), McClintock (1985: 208), Montgomery (1995: 56) and LeoGrande (2000: 48).

the total population of El Salvador at the time was less than five million, this was a huge membership. Moreover, ORDEN's territorial reach was truly national: the organization "penetrated every hamlet in the country" (Americas Watch 1991: 5), and "had brigades in every hamlet and village" (McClintock 1985: 38). In short, ORDEN was massive both in terms of membership and territorial reach.

In addition to spying, ORDEN was used for coercive and more explicitly political purposes. In terms of coercion, ORDEN served a paramilitary function. As President Sánchez Hernández (1967-1972) declared at one point: "ORDEN puts at the disposal of the Salvadorean [*sic*] State and the most responsible sectors of this country a civilian army that can be armed in 24 hours...and that could easily reach 150,000 men."<sup>40</sup> In their villages, "ORDEN members were...permitted—even encouraged—to carry sidearms" (Stanley 1996: 81). One ORDEN member likened the power he wielded in his community to that of the military president of the time (1977-1979), General Carlos Humberto Romero: "We can arrest anyone we want to, anyone who goes around putting strange ideas in the people's heads. Here in my *cantón* I feel like I am a little Romero. Here I am the Law."<sup>41</sup> As part of its paramilitary function, ORDEN engaged in various sorts of coercion, ranging from "goon squad" activities to torture and murder. In December 1966, for example, ORDEN members ransacked the offices of an opposition political party and destroyed the printing presses that it had used to produce leaflets calling for agrarian reform (McClintock 1985: 206). In 1968, ORDEN members were deployed against striking teachers, beating, torturing and killing several of them (McClintock 1985: 206). As state violence became more

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted in McClintock (1985: 207). Despite this boast, ORDEN probably never surpassed 100,000 members.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Armstrong and Shenk (1982: 101).

widespread during the 1970s, ORDEN members became increasingly involved, in conjunction with the regular security forces, in extrajudicial executions and mass killings, including the February 1977 massacre of 200 protesters in San Salvador's main square (Anderson 1988: 79). According to Americas Watch (1991: 5), the "rural vigilante force [ORDEN] is widely recognized as one of the precursors of the 'death squads' of the late 1970s and 1980s." The U.S. authorities echoed this assessment, with one declassified document asserting that ORDEN was "responsible for the intimidation, murder, and disappearance of Salvadorans suspected of involvement with the extreme left."<sup>42</sup> In light of ORDEN's documented involvement in "torture," "physical and psychological mistreatment" and "terrorist acts," the Organization of American States (OAS) strongly urged the Salvadoran authorities to dissolve the group in a report released in 1978.<sup>43</sup>

Most interesting of all, perhaps, was ORDEN's role in channeling popular support to the military regime. Despite its ongoing involvement in repression and ambiguous legal status,<sup>44</sup> ORDEN was not a clandestine organization. It was an aboveground entity that held ORDEN mass rallies, took out ORDEN advertisements in newspapers and whose members had ORDEN identification cards that entitled them to a range of special benefits.<sup>45</sup> Over time, ORDEN increasingly combined its intelligence and security functions with a more

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Arnson (2000: 92).

<sup>43</sup> See OAS (1978).

<sup>44</sup> ORDEN apparently had "no formal budget, no published statutes and certainly no public accountability" (Dunkerley 1982: 76). Nevertheless, it was not a clandestine entity, and in 1967 President Sánchez Hernández officially declared himself ORDEN's "Supreme Chief" (McClintock 1985: 206).

<sup>45</sup> On ORDEN mass rallies, see Baloyra (1982: 58) and Stanley (1996: 102); on ORDEN newspaper advertisements, see Lindo-Fuentes and Ching (2012: 77); and on ORDEN identification cards, see Cabarrús (1983: 43) and McClintock (1985: 253). ORDEN membership cards were considered to be so valuable that, according to ORDEN founder General Medrano, some of his successors began to engage in corruption by illegally selling ORDEN cards (Anderson and Anderson 1986: 192).



explicitly *political* role. As McClintock (1985: 212) puts it, ORDEN started to act “not only as a paramilitary but also as a para-political organization.” Indeed, according to Dunkerley (1982: 76), ORDEN evolved into a “species of political party”; it was “not just the shock-force but the organised constituency of the right in the [countryside].” Sometimes ORDEN’s coercive and political functions overlapped, as when it used force to disrupt opposition activities at election time.<sup>46</sup> However, it also played a positive role in mobilizing electoral support for the regime, “serving as a sort of mass rural auxiliary for the military’s official party, the PCN” (Stanley 1996: 82). By the late 1970s, there is some evidence that ORDEN had begun to supplant the PCN as the true organizational core of the military regime.<sup>47</sup> In his memoir, for example, one former PCN strategist asserts that he preferred to work with ORDEN over the official party apparatus, explaining: “ORDEN members were humble, very disciplined and serious people. I knew this very well because in several electoral campaigns that I directed, I preferred to work with ORDEN personnel instead of people from the PCN, for reasons of honesty and dedication” (Chávez 2006: 86). By the late 1970s, ORDEN’s status as a cornerstone of the military regime had become increasingly obvious, with “the official party, the National Conciliation Party...in almost complete

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<sup>46</sup> Over the years, ORDEN is believed to have become increasingly involved in fraud and intimidation in order to ensure electoral victories for PCN candidates. Following the March 1974 legislative and municipal elections, for example, the opposition UNO coalition issued the following statement: “[T]he paramilitary forces that now govern with the complacent complicity of the security forces are really the ones that have imposed their will. Canton patrols, local authorities, ORDEN members, all of them armed, dislodged the poll watchers and proceeded to carry out their own elections. The expression of the will of the people has been reduced to an operation in which ballots are marked in a closed room” (quoted in McClintock 1985: 181).

<sup>47</sup> According to one former PCN leader and presidential candidate: “The problem with ORDEN...was that it was a paramilitary group. It began as a support group to help the PCN. They were organized to be PCN activists... Then there were problems because PCN was a political party and ORDEN was paramilitary. ORDEN wanted to supplant the PCN” (quoted in Anderson and Anderson 1986: 190).

disarray, especially in rural areas, where it had been largely supplanted by the paramilitary elements of ORDEN and the ‘territorial’ militias” (Stanley 1996: 127).

To summarize, beginning in the 1930s, the Salvadoran military constructed one of the most robust and long-lasting authoritarian regimes in Latin America. In a region where coups were common, El Salvador’s fifty years of uninterrupted military rule gave the country the dubious distinction of having “the longest-lived series of military dictatorships in Latin America” (Paige 1997: 5). Making use of a range of new entities, including the PRUD/PCN, ANSESAL and ORDEN, the country’s military constructed a robust authoritarian regime based upon the twin pillars of brute force and unfair elections. This system allowed for the maintenance of labor-repressive agriculture, which was deemed essential for the continued profitability of the crucial coffee industry. Under this regime, economic elites no longer played a direct role in governing, a situation that they tolerated in exchange for the military’s commitment to do anything necessary to contain “communism” in El Salvador. This governing formula was remarkably stable, maintaining its basic form for a half-century. In 1979, however, the regime finally broke down, thereby setting in motion a complex chain of events that would eventually result in the formation of ARENA.

#### The October 1979 Coup and the Revolutionary Governing Junta

On 15 October 1979, junior officers launched a successful coup against the most recent military president, General Carlos Humberto Romero. Sending Romero and much of his entourage into exile, the putschists proclaimed the creation of a “Revolutionary Governing Junta,” and announced plans for a package of dramatic reforms. This was not

the first palace coup to take place in El Salvador since the onset of military rule in the 1930s. The 1979 coup, however, was different. It did not merely produce turnover at the top while leaving intact the basic features of the system; instead, it marked the end of the existing regime and set in motion a complex chain of events that would eventually result in democratization.<sup>48</sup> The new military authorities immediately issued a “Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador,” a radical document that took aim at virtually every aspect of the existing political and economic order.<sup>49</sup> Decrying the military’s long history of defending “the ancestral privileges of the dominant classes” and its participation in “corruption,” “human rights [violations]” and “scandalous electoral frauds,” the new junta declared its intention to carry out a “profound transformation of the economic, social, and political structures of the country.”<sup>50</sup> As part of this process, it issued a “general amnesty to all political prisoners,” declared “the right of all labor sectors to organize,” legalized “the formation of political parties of all ideologies,” announced plans for “a process of agrarian reform,” and asserted that private property would be respected only insofar as it served “a social function.”<sup>51</sup> The new junta also announced plans to dissolve ORDEN.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> As García (1989: 66) puts it: “The fall of Romero in fact represented the collapse of the entire Osorio system.” The reference is to Colonel Óscar Osorio, who was instrumental in crafting institutional military rule, and who was president from 1950 to 1956. Thus, the 1979 coup marked the end of the existing regime.

<sup>49</sup> Even Keogh (1984: 174), who is skeptical that the coup represented a true break with the past, admits: “The *Proclama* of 15 October [1979] was a relatively radical political document... There were a number of versions of the *Proclama*; the more radical document was selected and released.”

<sup>50</sup> See “Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador,” reproduced in Loveman and Davies (1997: 203-206).

<sup>51</sup> See “Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador,” reproduced in Loveman and Davies (1997: 203-206).

<sup>52</sup> See “Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador,” reproduced in Loveman and Davies (1997: 203-206).

The coup was a response to the increasingly crisis-ridden state of the military regime. Since the 1972 presidential election, the regime had come under intense strain. In light of blatant electoral fraud and the military's violent crackdown on political activity, many opponents of the regime began to opt for armed struggle, concluding that there was "no other way out" (Goodwin 2001). In the months after the fraudulent 1972 election, two new guerrilla groups announced their existence: the Popular Forces of Liberation-Farabundo Martí (FPL), which was comprised largely of Communist Party dissidents, and the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), which "was set up by...radicalised Christian Democrats" (Dunkerley 1982: 91-92).<sup>53</sup> The military authorities responded to the creation and violent activities of these and other groups with increasingly brutal repression, which in turn "encouraged corresponding escalation of guerrilla operations" (Dunkerley 1982: 118).<sup>54</sup> Following General Romero's victory in the fraudulent 1977 presidential election, the country descended into a "spiral of mass demonstrations and protests, government repression, left-wing kidnappings, occupations of public buildings, labor strikes, and death-squad murders" (Montgomery 1995: 72). The feeling that El Salvador was approaching a revolutionary situation was given a dramatic boost by events in neighboring Nicaragua, where, in July 1979, leftist guerrillas overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza and installed a revolutionary regime. The collapse of the Somoza dictatorship, which had superficial resemblances to the

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<sup>53</sup> By 1980, there were five major guerrilla groups in El Salvador: the Popular Forces of Liberation-Farabundo Martí (FPL), the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), the Revolutionary Party of the Workers of Central America (PRTC) and the Armed Forces of Liberation (FAL). In October 1980, these five groups fused into a single guerrilla confederation: the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). See Montgomery (1995: 101-126), Allison (2006) and McClintock (1998).

<sup>54</sup> As Stanley (1996: 115) explains, the increase in military repression was counterproductive: "The crackdown was in a sense a boon to the guerrilla organizations of the left... As government violence increased...they found that repression became the most effective rallying cry." In short, repression "not only failed to suppress the left but had in fact radicalized it and hastened its progress toward taking arms *en masse*" (Stanley 1996: 127).

Salvadoran regime,<sup>55</sup> “sharpen[ed] everyone’s awareness that Romero’s government could likewise fall to a popular revolution” (Stanley 1996: 127). Indeed, graffiti immediately began to appear in San Salvador with the ominous phrase “Somoza today, Romero tomorrow.”<sup>56</sup> It seemed only a matter of time before the Salvadoran regime also fell to the armed left.

The Nicaraguan Revolution was the immediate catalyst for the coup that occurred in El Salvador three months later. For years, junior officers had been grumbling about the direction of the country, with many “personally offended” by widespread electoral fraud and high levels of corruption among senior officers, and “angry at the damage it did to the prestige and integrity of the armed forces as an institution” (Stanley 1996: 100). In addition, many were disturbed by the regime’s use of violence against priests, and were concerned more generally about the growing “prevalence of torture, disappearances, and death-squad style murders” (Stanley 1996: 139). It was not until events in Nicaragua added considerations of self-interest to these more principled concerns, however, that they decided to act.<sup>57</sup> In order to prevent a repeat of the Nicaraguan experience in their own country—and believing that the strategy of pure repression was not working—they sought “to break the cycle of violence by giving the opposition the radical change it wanted” (Stanley 1996:

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<sup>55</sup> Scholars disagree about whether the parallels drawn between Nicaragua and El Salvador were justified. Some believe that the Salvadoran regime would have been overthrown, if not for an increase in U.S. military aid in the wake of the Nicaraguan Revolution. In this sense, the Salvadoran revolutionaries were “doomed by being second in line” (Dunkerley 1988: 338), not because conditions for revolution in the country were not ripe. However, as Goodwin (2001: 182) notes, the Nicaraguan dictatorship, which was “sultanistic” in nature, was actually very different from—and far weaker than—El Salvador’s more institutionalized authoritarian regime.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Dunkerley (1982: 126).

<sup>57</sup> These considerations of self-interest were magnified by the sight of former Nicaraguan officials fleeing through El Salvador. As Montgomery (1995: 74) explains: “[W]ith Somoza’s departure the National Guard, which had been the dictator’s personal army, collapsed. The dissolution of the Nicaraguan National Guard, many of whose members fled through El Salvador, had a profound effect on many Salvadorean officers. They saw men who had lost homes, money, and country. They looked at the growing strength of the popular organizations and guerrillas. They saw the same fate that befell the Nicaraguans befalling them before long.”

132). Their goal was “to establish a regime somewhat akin to that of General [Juan] Velasco in Peru between 1968 and 1975,”<sup>58</sup> and in this way to “eradicat[e] the left by beating it at its own game” (Dunkerley 1982: 135). In the words of one observer: “[They] did not want to avoid revolutionary changes in El Salvador. But [they] did want to avoid bloody revolution” (Keogh 1984: 161). In short, the putschists sought to undercut popular support for the armed left by carrying out their own package of radical reforms.

The Revolutionary Governing Junta was remarkably different from previous military governments in El Salvador, and was perceived by many to be “frighteningly left-wing” (Stanley 1996: 149). For once, this was not just paranoia on the part of the Salvadoran right; the new government *was* remarkably left-wing. Several of the main military organizers of the coup were openly sympathetic to the left, with one describing himself as a “democratic Socialist” (Keogh 1984: 161) and another eventually leaving the military to join the country’s guerrillas (Stanley 1996: 139).<sup>59</sup> While the most radical officers were sidelined prior to the coup and prevented from assuming places on the new junta, they retained considerable influence over initial policy statements and, even more importantly, the selection of junta members and ministerial appointees.<sup>60</sup> This was significant, because an important part of the putschists’ plan in organizing the coup had been to incorporate leftist civilians into the

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<sup>58</sup> For descriptions of the left-leaning military regime of General Velasco in Peru, see Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>59</sup> These were Lieutenant Colonel René Guerra y Guerra and Captain Francisco Mena Sandoval, respectively.

<sup>60</sup> On the complex chain of events that led to the exclusion of the more radical young officers from the junta, see Keogh (1984). Nevertheless, as Stanley (1996: 148) explains, they retained significant influence: “The more radical captains were...in a combative mood in the immediate aftermath of the coup. They were in control of barracks—and most of the combat troops—all over the country. Having risked their lives to take control and arrest their superiors, they expected to hear a public proclamation consistent with their thinking... The threat of further rebellion by the junior officers was sufficiently compelling to ensure that the makeup of most of the new government, and its first public pronouncements, were in line with their reformist agenda.” As discussed below, major disputes quickly erupted between reformists and hardliners in the military. However, “[i]n the immediate aftermath of the coup...most believed that the reformists had the upper hand” (Stanley 1996: 134).

government and, in partnership with the military, allow them to carry out many of the changes that they had long advocated. As Keogh (1984: 161) explains, the organizers of the coup aimed “[to open] political institutions to the left and [give] the popular organisations a place in the government,” who would then be encouraged to carry out “revolutionary changes in El Salvador in the social, economic and political system.” The new junta was composed of two military officers and three civilians. Of the military officers, one was a reformist (Colonel Adolfo Majano) and the other was a conservative (Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez).<sup>61</sup> Two of the civilians were identified with the left: one was the rector of the Jesuit and left-leaning Central American University (UCA) (Román Mayorga Quiroz),<sup>62</sup> and the other was the head of the social democratic National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) (Guillermo Ungo), and had been Duarte’s running mate in the fraudulent 1972 presidential election. The third civilian was a businessman (Mario Andino), and was apparently appointed as a gesture to the private sector.<sup>63</sup>

Even more remarkable than the radical “Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador” and the presence of progressive civilians on the junta was the left-leaning flavor of the junta’s cabinet appointments.<sup>64</sup> In the new government, “all but three ministries were headed by Christian Democrats, Communists from the National Democratic Union [UDN],

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<sup>61</sup> These two men came to symbolize competing factions within the military, with those supporting reforms backing Majano and those wishing to scuttle those reforms backing Gutiérrez. For a discussion of these intra-military disputes, see Montgomery (1995: 73-77), Stanley (1996: 133-217) and LeoGrande (2000: 46-48).

<sup>62</sup> Jesuit support for the coup was believed to be widespread: “They [organizers of the coup] also sought support from among the intellectuals at the Catholic University (UCA)...and other members of the Jesuit order. In fact, the coup is often referred to in El Salvador as the ‘coup of the Jesuits’ ” (Anderson 1988: 85).

<sup>63</sup> See Montgomery (1995: 77) and Stanley (1996: 149).

<sup>64</sup> According to Montgomery (1995: 77), this “cabinet...was widely regarded as the most progressive in Salvadorean history.”

Social Democrats [MNR], or reformist technocrats with ties to the UCA [Central American University]” (Stanley 1996: 134). Because the UDN was widely known to be a legal front for the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS),<sup>65</sup> the entry “of the UDN into the cabinet was effectively the entry of the PCS into government” (Dunkerley 1982: 138). In short, the new junta filled the top spot of nearly every ministry with leading figures from the very “subversive” forces that the old regime had spent decades demonizing and fighting.<sup>66</sup> In a country where military rule since the 1930s had been justified in terms of anti-communism, the military’s appointment of leftists to high office—including actual members of the Communist Party—was an extraordinary departure. For many, it was terrifying. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the formation of the Revolutionary Governing Junta was of crucial importance for the eventual formation of ARENA. El Salvador had long faced a growing “threat ‘from below’ ” (Johnson 1998: 129) in the form of guerrillas. However, the “threat ‘from above’ ” (Johnson 1998: 129) in the form of a leftist government backed by the military—or, at least, an important segment of the military—was truly novel. When these threats were combined with a third—a threat “from without” (Johnson 1998: 129) in the form of U.S. support for the junta—it created a truly menacing situation for Salvadoran elites. This would prompt them, first, to support the use of “death squad” killings, and later, to support the formation of an authoritarian successor party, ARENA.

Ultimately, neither the worst fears of reactionaries nor the most optimistic hopes of revolutionaries were realized. Dreams of a top-down revolution were quickly dashed after it became apparent that the junta lacked the capacity to carry out much of its program. The

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<sup>65</sup> See Dunkerley (1982: 84), Anderson (1988: 76) and Stanley (1996: 149).

<sup>66</sup> The UDN was given five cabinet posts. This number was matched only by the Christian Democrats, who also received five cabinet posts. The MNR received four cabinet positions. See Stanley (1996: 149).



main reason was opposition from conservative sectors within the military, which successfully managed to scuttle many of the most ambitious plans for reform.<sup>67</sup> Even before the day of the coup, some of the more left-leaning soldiers had already been sidelined by more conservative officers,<sup>68</sup> and after the coup was carried out, this “progressive marginalisation of the ‘[Y]oung [T]urks’ ” (Dunkerley 1982: 136) continued. Part of the problem was that “[t]he core of the [military] reform movement was made up of young, politically inexperienced officers,” who, because of their inexperience, could be “easily subordinated, intimidated, outmaneuvered, and conned by their superiors” (Stanley 1996: 137). This meant that while they had the power “organize a rebellion to throw out President Romero and maintain sufficient pressure on their superiors to ensure a radical proclamation and the selection of reformist civilians for the junta, they were singularly ill-equipped to verify and enforce subsequent compliance with their agenda” (Stanley 1996: 176). Similarly, the civilians in the junta and cabinet soon discovered that much of the military did not respect their authority, and would often simply refuse to carry out policies with which it disagreed.<sup>69</sup> Even more troublingly, the junta was unable to achieve one of its core objectives: a reduction in violence. In fact, as discussed in the next section, violence actually increased

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<sup>67</sup> See Keogh (1984) and Stanley (1996: 133-177).

<sup>68</sup> On this “coup within a coup,” see Keogh (1984).

<sup>69</sup> This was even true for conservative officers within the government. During a cabinet meeting in December 1979, for example, after officials from the agriculture and planning ministries presented plans for land, banking and commercial reforms, the defense minister, Colonel José García, reportedly responded: “All of this shit that you have been discussing is not going to happen. We are not going to permit it” (quoted in Stanley 1996: 157). In another incident involving the defense minister, the head of the National Guard explained to the junta in explicit terms that the armed forces did not respect its authority: “On 22 December [1979], civilian members of the government met with officials of the high command. Following a heated debate about continued repression and the blockage of reforms, Defense Minister García introduced National Guard Director Vides Casanova to speak for the armed forces. Vides’ comments were a powerful assertion of institutional military supremacy: ‘Colonel García is the man from whom we take orders, not the junta. We have put you into the position where you are, and...we don’t need you. We have been running the country for 50 years, and we are quite prepared to keep running it’ ” (Stanley 1996: 174). See also Anderson (1988: 89) and Stanley (1996: 176).

after the coup, much of it by “death squads” targeting the very progressive and popular groups whose favor the progressive members of the junta were trying to curry. Frustrated by the lack of progress on the reform agenda, and dismayed by continuing—indeed, increasing—repression, in late December 1979, all civilian members of the junta and government resigned.

Yet the October 1979 coup was not completely without effect. While the most radical military and civilian backers of the coup failed to realize their goals of a peaceful transformation of the country’s politics and economy, the coup nevertheless produced important and lasting changes. In January 1980, days after the mass resignation of civilians from the junta and cabinet (though not of the military members), a new junta was formed in partnership with the Christian Democrats.<sup>70</sup> While the Christian Democrats were, in theory, a moderate political force, they quickly embarked on a far-reaching program of economic transformation. In March 1980, this military-Christian Democratic junta announced two major reforms: a massive land reform<sup>71</sup> and the nationalization of the country’s banking system. Under the land reform, the military would be permitted to forcibly seize nearly half a million acres, or about 25 percent of El Salvador’s arable land.<sup>72</sup> Expropriations would be targeted overwhelmingly at the country’s largest agricultural estates, and would be repaid in government bonds maturing over a 25-year period. The expropriated land would then be

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<sup>70</sup> For a discussion of this second junta, see Anderson (1988: 91-92) and Stanley (1996: 183-184).

<sup>71</sup> The first junta had already taken steps toward land reform, despite foot-dragging by more conservative officers: “[P]art of the reform was carried out. Decree 43, issued on 7 December [1979], froze all major land transactions retroactively to 15 October [1979], thereby preventing large landowners from breaking up their holdings and distributing them among relatives and friends. This was, of course, a preliminary step in the implementation of a major land reform, a fact not lost on the country’s private sector” (Stanley 1996: 157).

<sup>72</sup> See Anderson (1988: 95-96). See also Dunkerley (1982: 158), Johnson (1993: 192-198, 202-204), Stanley (1996: 194-196) and Paige (1997: 34).

redistributed among peasants, who, while receiving individual plots, would be encouraged to work the land collectively. The junta also announced the nationalization of the country's banking system, which came in conjunction with an earlier decree by the first junta to nationalize the export sector.<sup>73</sup> These were not minor reforms. As García (1989: 68) notes: "All of these measures were tangible, not just symbolic, efforts by the new government to secure some autonomy for itself over the extreme right wing oligarchy and to serve notice that a centrist government had taken control." For economic elites, these reforms to the landowning, banking and export systems were truly alarming. For fifty years, they had been sheltered from reformist threats by their military allies. Now, working hand-in-glove with the very political forces they had long fought, the military had "initiated a series of reforms directed squarely at the institutional power of the coffee elite," striking "against the control over land, processing, exports, and finance that was the heart of coffee elite power" (Paige 1997: 34). The decades-old "protection racket" (Stanley 1996) had been broken.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to posing a direct threat to economic elites, the post-coup authorities took aim at parts of the security apparatus. Thus, upon taking power, the new junta announced that it would carry out "a purge and reorganization of the security forces" (Stanley 1996: 135). Like economic policy, reforms in this area were not as deep as many had hoped, but they were not immaterial either. For example, shortly after the coup, "[s]ixty-six senior officers were summarily dismissed" from the military, and "[s]ixty National Guardsmen soon followed" (Stanley 1996: 135). Similarly, a civilian court convicted an

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<sup>73</sup> The nationalization of the export sector resulted in the creation of a monopsony, whereby a single state-owned entity, the National Institute of Coffee (INCAFE), became the exclusive buyer of coffee from coffee producers. For a description of this reform, see Johnson (1993: 198-201) and Paige (1997: 194-198).

<sup>74</sup> See also Paige (1997: 34).

ORDEN member for the murder of a teacher (Stanley 1996: 150). While many of the deepest reforms to the security apparatus were ultimately blocked, two highly consequential ones were implemented: the dissolution of ANSESAL<sup>75</sup> and the dissolution of ORDEN. In November 1979, the junta issued a decree in which ORDEN was officially “dissolved” and all acts done in its name were deemed “illegal” and “abuses of authority.”<sup>76</sup> ORDEN identification cards, which had hitherto entitled their holders to a host of special privileges, were now declared “without value,” and the authorities were ordered “to confiscate such documents from any person that seeks to make use of them.”<sup>77</sup> For the thousands of ORDEN members and their families, the group’s dissolution had a powerful impact, both materially and psychologically. Materially, they would no longer enjoy “easier and cheaper access to agricultural inputs, personal loans, health care and education for their families, and immunity from prosecution for minor offenses” (Stanley 1996: 81). Psychologically, after years of thinking themselves as valued defenders of the fatherland against the forces of subversion, “communists” in the government had suddenly made them into virtual pariahs. As will be seen in the next section, neither ANSESAL nor ORDEN really disappeared. Instead, both would remain at least partially active by going underground, where they would continue to engage in repressive activities. Nevertheless, their formal dissolution was significant, providing their members with a grievance against the new authorities and freeing them to participate in new political initiatives, including the formation of ARENA.

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<sup>75</sup> See Pyes (1983: 6), Montgomery (1995: 76) and Stanley (1996: 149).

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in McClintock (1985: 253).

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in McClintock (1985: 253).

In short, the October 1979 coup had a major impact on political life in El Salvador, effectively spelling the end of the old regime. It drove a wedge between the military and economic elites, and it also alienated much of the security apparatus. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, this would have a crucial impact on the eventual formation of ARENA, driving elites to support, first, “death squad” killings, and, later, to back Roberto D’Aubuisson in his effort to build an authoritarian successor party. Where the organizers of the coup failed absolutely, however, was in their main objective: the reduction of violence and the avoidance of civil war. They had hoped that by seizing power and initiating a series of ambitious reforms, they could tame the military and mollify the armed left. Exactly the opposite occurred. State repression, which had already reached alarming levels in the years leading up to the coup, reached new heights. The armed left responded with its own wave of killings and, in October 1980, the country’s various guerrilla groups amalgamated into a single guerrilla confederation, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). By 1980, the country had collapsed into full-blown civil war, which would not end until the signing of peace accords in 1992. The war produced one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s great humanitarian catastrophes, with over 70,000 Salvadorans killed.<sup>78</sup> Most of those who died were civilians, many at the hands of the country’s infamous “death squads.” In the following section, I describe these “death squads” and their relationship to Roberto D’Aubuisson. Given the central role of D’Aubuisson in the formation and subsequent success of ARENA, I discuss his career and role in the violence in considerable detail. I also discuss the concept of “death squads,” a term frequently invoked in discussions of El Salvador in the 1980s and the formation of ARENA, but which is not always well understood.

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<sup>78</sup> See Stanley (1996: 218) and Lehoucq (2012: 92).

### Roberto D'Aubuisson and the "Death Squads"

On 18 October 1979, three days after the reformist coup, Major Roberto D'Aubuisson is said to have announced his intention to resign from the armed forces.<sup>79</sup> Born in 1943, he had until that moment spent his entire adult life in the military.<sup>80</sup> After completing his studies at the military academy in the early 1960s, the young officer was sent to serve in the National Guard, where he soon became a protégé of General José Alberto Medrano, the commander of the National Guard and the founder of ANSESAL and ORDEN.<sup>81</sup> Under the guidance of Medrano, D'Aubuisson "helped to found and consolidate both organizations" (Galeas 2004: 6). As described above, ANSESAL and ORDEN became two of the cornerstones of the military regime's intelligence and security apparatus, and played a key role in monitoring and meting out violence against suspected "subversives." As he rose through the ranks, D'Aubuisson made a name for himself with his intense anti-communism. In the late 1970s, he authored an influential report that became "*the* text on the relationships between social reformers and Marxist guerrillas for the various Salvadoran governmental intelligence services" (Pyes 1983: 6).<sup>82</sup> D'Aubuisson also became known for his propensity for violence. Medrano is said to have referred to him as

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<sup>79</sup> See ARENA (2011: 18).

<sup>80</sup> Despite D'Aubuisson's prominent and controversial role in Salvadoran history, surprisingly little has been written on his life. Two exceptions are a rather sympathetic biography written by Galeas (2004), which initially was published in a series of installments in *La Prensa Gráfica*, and a master's thesis by Ross (1997). To date, however, no high-quality academic biography of D'Aubuisson has been written.

<sup>81</sup> See Nairn (1984); McClintock (1985: 204-209, 217-219); and Anderson and Anderson (1986: 189-190).

<sup>82</sup> These alleged ties were not necessarily known to those involved, since, as D'Aubuisson later explained in an interview: "You can be a Communist even if you personally don't believe you are a Communist." Quoted in Laurie Becklund, "Death Squads: Deadly 'Other War,'" *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

one of “my three murderers,”<sup>83</sup> and he also earned the nickname “Major Blowtorch,” in reference to the instrument of torture he was rumored to prefer during interrogations.<sup>84</sup> The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would later describe him as “egocentric and reckless,” and “perhaps mentally unstable.”<sup>85</sup> He also received training at foreign security institutions, including the U.S.-run School of the Americas in the Panama Canal Zone.<sup>86</sup> In the late 1970s, D’Aubuisson became the deputy director of ANSESAL, putting him near the top of the military regime’s intelligence and security apparatus. According to one ARENA leader very close to him, D’Aubuisson oversaw the day-to-day running of the agency and was, for all intents and purposes, “in charge of ANSESAL.”<sup>87</sup> This made Major D’Aubuisson a more powerful figure in the regime than his rank would suggest: “[D’Aubuisson] might have had the rank of major, which is an intermediate rank in the military hierarchy, but he had the job of head of intelligence. [This] put him above superior officers.”<sup>88</sup>

According to ARENA lore, D’Aubuisson made his decision to end his twenty-year career in the armed forces after receiving an order to organize a press conference for the three civilian members of the Revolutionary Governing Junta. After hearing their promises to reestablish relations with Cuba and strengthen ties to the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, D’Aubuisson is said to have changed into civilian clothes and thrown his military uniform in

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<sup>83</sup> See Christopher Dickey, “The Truth About the Death Squads,” *The New Republic*, 26 December 1983.

<sup>84</sup> See Amnesty International (1988: 10), LeoGrande (2000: 48) and Montgomery (1995: 133).

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Arnson (2000: 94).

<sup>86</sup> See “Historia del Mayor Roberto d’Aubuisson,” <http://www.arena.com.sv/historia.html>. Accessed on 12 September 2013. See also Anderson and Anderson (1986: 193).

<sup>87</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 8 October 2012.

<sup>88</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 8 October 2012.

the garbage, telling his commanding officer: “They can discharge me [from the military] or they can kill me, but I am not going to participate in this nonsense, much less serve the communists.”<sup>89</sup> At home he told his wife: “Things are going to be tough for us, Yolanda, but I don’t work for communists.”<sup>90</sup> While this story may be apocryphal,<sup>91</sup> it captures well the shock and disillusion that many in the security apparatus felt in the aftermath of the October 1979 coup. After years of struggle against supposedly foreign-inspired “subversives” who wanted to destroy El Salvador, they were now being told to accept orders from precisely those subversives—including actual communists. According to one ARENA founder, D’Aubuisson and his “comrades in arms” were absolutely “stunned” when the leadership of the Communist Party arrived at the presidential palace the day after the coup (Panamá 2005: 40). D’Aubuisson did not believe that the putschists were motivated by a desire to prevent a revolution by the armed left. Instead, as ARENA (2011: 19) explains in an official history: “For him, this coup d’état had been a conspiracy by left-wing civilians with clear links to various guerrilla groups and parts of the military that sympathized with them.” The October 1979 coup and the composition of the new junta convinced hardliners in the security apparatus that the times had changed, and that they would have to change their tactics accordingly. After twenty years inside the old regime, D’Aubuisson would now have to pursue his struggle against “communists” through different means. He would do so

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<sup>89</sup> Quoted in ARENA (2011: 18).

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in ARENA (2011: 18).

<sup>91</sup> Some claim that D’Aubuisson did not resign but rather was purged from the military. For example, Arnson (2000: 93) writes that D’Aubuisson “was cashiered in a purge of right-wing military officers.” Similarly, LeoGrande (2000: 49) asserts that he “was forced out of the armed forces because of his death squad connections.” See also Warren Hoge, “Rightist Flag Bearer Roberto d’Aubuisson,” *The New York Times*, 1 April 1982.



in two main ways: first, as a coordinator of “death squad” killings, and later, as the founder of a new party, ARENA.

If there is one term that became more closely associated with El Salvador during the 1980s than any other, it is “death squad.” The term evoked the image of people being dragged out of their homes at night, tortured and murdered, with their mutilated corpses turning up days later in garbage dumps or by the side of the road. While this horrific fate befell thousands of Salvadorans, the term “death squad” was somewhat misleading.<sup>92</sup> As Nairn (1984: 25) wrote in a classic piece on the subject: “The use of the term ‘Death Squad’ has, in some respects, fostered a profound misunderstanding of El Salvador’s official terror apparatus. It conjures up images of discrete bands of gangsters randomly cruising the countryside in search of opportunities to kill. In fact, the term more meaningfully applies to a system that can dispatch a soldier at any time to kill a selected victim.” Many others agreed with this assessment, preferring to define “death squads” not as a kind of *group* (as implied by the word “squad”), but instead as a kind of *strategy*. The “‘death squad’ strategy,” according to Amnesty International (1988: 8), can be defined as “murder through domestic covert action.” Understood in this way, “death squad” killings can be carried out by different kinds of groups, whether of a public, private or hybrid nature. The reason that some groups favor the “death squad” strategy is that it allows them to repress enemies while maintaining an official distance—what Campbell and Brenner (2000) call “murder with deniability.” In this respect, the “death squad” strategy is similar to that of “disappearing” people—but with one significant difference. By definition, extrajudicial execution via “disappearance” requires that an effort be made to hide the body of the victim. Extrajudicial execution via “death squad,”

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<sup>92</sup> For a useful discussion of the concept of “death squads,” see Campbell (2000). See also Mazzei (2009).

in contrast, often involves making a spectacle of the killing in order to spread terror among the target population: “For this reason, most death squads (though by no means all) make sure that their actions are very public: they leave their victims to be found in public places, they torture and mutilate them in memorable and horrific ways, and they sometimes even leave notes or visible signs that they were victims of a particular unit” (Campbell 2000: 4-5). Thus, death squad killings “involve the paradox of being secretive and covert,” while also being carried out in a “particularly public and gruesome fashion” (Campbell 2000: 4-5).

“Death squad” killings were not new to El Salvador. Many earlier killings had been carried out by ANSESAL and ORDEN,<sup>93</sup> which earned General Medrano, the founder of both organizations and D’Aubuisson’s mentor, the nickname “father of the death squads.”<sup>94</sup> Medrano was candid about his role in ordering extrajudicial executions, explaining: “All the guerrillas are traitors to the Fatherland, because they fight in the service of a foreign power [the Soviet Union]. And the law against that is the death penalty. So we applied that law against them.”<sup>95</sup> In other instances, “death squad” killings were carried out by private groups. One of the most notorious examples grew out a Boy Scout troop in the town of Santiago de María. Its leader was Héctor Antonio Regalado, a local dentist who “trained the teen-agers [*sic*] in weapons and tactics, then sent them to kill Marxist-led guerrillas.”<sup>96</sup> In 1980, fearing

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<sup>93</sup> For a discussion of the role of ANSESAL and ORDEN in earlier “death squad” killings, see Nairn (1984); McClintock (1985); Americas Watch (1991: 4-5); and LeoGrande (2000: 48-49).

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Lindo-Fuentes and Ching (2012: 77).

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Anderson and Anderson (1986: 191). In another interview, Medrano asserted: “In this revolutionary war, the enemy comes from our people... They don’t have the rights of Geneva. They are traitors to the country. What we can the troops do? When they find them, they kill them” (quoted in Nairn 1984: 23).

<sup>96</sup> See Douglas Farah, “Death Squad Began as Scout Troop,” *The Washington Post*, 29 August 1988.

that they knew too much, he had several of the boys killed.<sup>97</sup> Other groups blurred the lines between “public” and “private,” such as the Armed Forces of National Liberation—War of Extermination (FALANGE), which later changed its name to the White Warriors’ Union (UGB). While not officially connected to the state security apparatus, it was widely believed to be composed of “off-duty members of the military and vigilantes [who] undertook specific assassinations that could not be sanctioned formally by the armed forces’ hierarchy” (Dunkerley 1982: 104). As these examples illustrate, the “death squad” phenomenon in El Salvador had always been a diverse one: some of the perpetrators of such killings were directly linked to the state, some were private and others were in-between.

If “death squad” killings had a long history in El Salvador, they reached new heights after the October 1979 coup. By any standard, repression had already been extreme before the coup: in 1978, killings by the state and allied groups had averaged 57 per month (Stanley 1996: 115). After the coup, however, violence reached unprecedented heights, resulting in what Montgomery (1995: 134) aptly describes as “The New Matanza.” In October 1979, violence attributed to the security forces and their allies occurred at triple the level of September, and in December, “violence escalated to five times the levels seen during the last, bloody months of Romero’s administration” (Stanley 1996: 135).<sup>98</sup> The next year was even worse. In 1980, approximately 12,000 people were killed, most “either captured and executed by the death squads or killed in wholesale massacres carried out by government forces in rural areas” (Stanley 1996: 179).<sup>99</sup> Victims’ bodies were left (often with signs of

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<sup>97</sup> See Douglas Farah, “Death Squad Began as Scout Troop,” *The Washington Post*, 29 August 1988.

<sup>98</sup> See also Stanley (1996: 166).

<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of a particularly notorious massacre carried out by the security forces in December 1981, which is known as the “El Mozote Massacre,” see Binford (1996).

torture) on the side of the road, or in designated locations that became so commonplace that they inspired a neologism: “*botaderos de cadáveres*,” or “body dumps.”<sup>100</sup> The brazenness of the killings also reached new heights. In February 1980, for example, attorney general and Christian Democrat Mario Zamora was murdered in his home, and in November of the same year, the entire leadership of the leftist Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) party was abducted in broad daylight during a party meeting and killed.<sup>101</sup> The most remarkable killing of all was that of Archbishop Óscar Romero, who was shot in March 1980 while giving Mass (described below). As if this were not enough, over 30 people were killed at the archbishop’s funeral when a bomb exploded and gunmen opened fire on the mourners.<sup>102</sup>

What was remarkable about this “New Matanza” was that it occurred under a government expressly committed to curbing violence. How was this possible? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to disaggregate the concept of “the state,” and to take seriously the notion that the state does not always act as a unified actor. As Stanley (1996: 5) has convincingly argued, to understand politics and patterns of violence in El Salvador, it is necessary “to avoid thinking of the state as a single, rational entity.” Instead, it is necessary to “disassemble the state analytically, examining state factions and their relationships with each other and with different components of civil society,” and to understand that those factions can sometimes even work “at cross purposes” (Stanley 1996: 7, 5).<sup>103</sup> In the previous section, this phenomenon was discussed while attempting to explain the junta’s

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<sup>100</sup> See Amnesty International (1988: 9).

<sup>101</sup> See Dunkerley (1982: 170), Stanley (1996: 178) and LeoGrande (2000: 59).

<sup>102</sup> See Anderson (1988: 97) and Stanley (1996: 178).

<sup>103</sup> For a similar argument about the importance of disaggregating the state in order to understand “death squad” violence, see Mazzei (2009).

inability to carry out its most ambitious reforms. The most grisly manifestation of this bifurcation of the state, however, was seen in the explosion of “death squad” violence. According to Stanley (1996), this was part of a deliberate strategy by more conservative factions of the military to discredit the post-1979 juntas. As he explains: “The long-term acceptance of the government by the popular left, and therefore its ability to restore some general sense of governability to the country, depended upon its ability to deliver reforms and stop repression. It was obviously vulnerable to the autonomous ability of the military high command and the security forces to unleash violence against the popular movement” (Stanley 1996: 160). He continues: “By attacking the popular left, [military] hardliners could ensure that any kind of inclusionary strategy would fail. Without the capacity to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the populace, the reformist project was doomed” (Stanley 1996: 177). While the bulk of this violence was directed against civilians, it occasionally also targeted members of the military known to be reformists. For example, Colonel Adolfo Majano, the most reformist of the two military members of the junta, was the target of three assassination attempts, and at least four of his supporters in the military were assassinated.<sup>104</sup>

The killings that took place during these years were ostensibly carried out by mysterious “death squads” beyond the control of the state. In reality, knowledgeable observers concluded that many of the killings were carried out by the state security apparatus itself, or at the very least were carried out with state acquiescence. This point was made in an Amnesty International (1988) report aptly titled *El Salvador: “Death Squads”—A Government Strategy*.<sup>105</sup> U.S. governmental agencies came to the same conclusion, believing

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<sup>104</sup> See Stanley (1996: 180).

<sup>105</sup> As the report explained: “In El Salvador, as in other countries where the strategy has been used, successive administrations have claimed the ‘death squads’ to be independent, extremist groups of the left and right, which

that many “death squad” killings were carried out by parts of the state security apparatus, such as the National Guard, the National Police, the Treasury Police and the regular army.<sup>106</sup> The journalist Allan Nairn (1984: 25) quotes one U.S. official in El Salvador who asserted: “Every garrison of any size had Death Squads. It’s that simple.”<sup>107</sup> Even “death squad” killings carried out by private or hybrid groups appeared to have the implicit blessing of the military: “The style and brazenness of operation suggested either state complicity or, at a minimum, because of the frequency of killings and the squads’ freedom of operation, state acquiescence” (Arnson 2000: 86). Less clear is the degree to which the violence was coordinated, and at what level in the state hierarchy it had approval.<sup>108</sup> There is little doubt, though, that the vast majority of “death squad” killings were either directly carried out by members of the state security apparatus, or were carried out by private and hybrid groups with the implicit support of sectors of the security apparatus.

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the government was unable to control. However, after examination of the available evidence, Amnesty International has concluded that the Salvadorian [sic] ‘death squads’ are simply used to shield the government from accountability for the torture, ‘disappearances’ and extrajudicial executions committed in their name. The squads are made up of regular army and police agents, acting in uniform of plain clothes, under the orders of superior officers” (Amnesty International 1988: 9). See also Wood (2005: 185).

<sup>106</sup> Summarizing the findings of a large number of declassified documents from a range of U.S. agencies, Arnson (2000: 110) writes: “[D]eath squads in El Salvador were deeply rooted in official security bodies, particularly the intelligence sections of the Treasury Police, National Police, and National Guard, but also the army and air force.” In some cases, the security forces involved in “death squad” killings did not even bother to remove their uniforms. For example, in November 1980, most of the executive committee of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), a left-wing political party, were abducted in broad daylight by men still wearing uniforms from different branches of the security forces. The next day, their mutilated bodies were found, together with a note from a “death squad,” the Maximiliano Hernández Martínez Anti-Communist Brigade (LeoGrande 2000: 59). The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) concluded the obvious: the killings were “the work of the security forces” (quoted in LeoGrande 2000: 59).

<sup>107</sup> For a similar finding by another influential investigative journalist, see Pyes (1983: 31).

<sup>108</sup> Stanley (1996: 164), for example, writes that “much of the violence carried out by the military was not centrally controlled. Looseness of command hierarchy pervaded the Salvadoran military.” In contrast, Amnesty International (1988) alleged that execution orders were issued by superior officers.

No one was more closely associated with the explosion of “death squad” violence than Roberto D’Aubuisson. As a protégé of Medrano and a high-level member of the security apparatus in the old regime, D’Aubuisson had a long history of involvement in “death squad” killings.<sup>109</sup> This involvement did not end with his formal departure from the armed forces. On the contrary, in his new capacity as a self-described “civilian collaborator”<sup>110</sup> of the armed forces, D’Aubuisson played a central role in “The New Matanza,” and indeed, became the public face of the “death squad” phenomenon. D’Aubuisson contributed to “death squad” violence in several ways. First, he helped to preserve the old regime’s domestic intelligence apparatus, which had long been associated with “death squad” killings. A few days after the October 1979 coup, fearing—correctly, it turned out—that the new authorities would try to dissolve ANSESAL, conservative members of the military high command asked D’Aubuisson to remove the files housed in ANSESAL headquarters in the presidential palace, and to help organize a “new ANSESAL” in a military compound out of the reach of reformists (Pyes 1983: 8). As Colonel Gutiérrez, the conservative member of the junta mentioned above, later admitted: “We found ourselves obliged to close ANSESAL and open another...[s]o we called D’Aubuisson [and] sent him over there.”<sup>111</sup> D’Aubuisson not only helped to reorganize ANSESAL, but, according to investigative journalist Craig Pyes (1983: 7), actually remained on the military payroll: “D’Aubuisson was employed by the military for at least six weeks after he formally resigned,

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<sup>109</sup> D’Aubuisson admitted as much in one interview while discussing his earlier career in ANSESAL, asserting: “We began to act incorrectly and not take them [leftists under investigation] to the judge, but make them ‘disappear’ instead so the same chain wouldn’t continue.” Quoted in Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

reorganizing the central ANSESAL files for the army general staff.”<sup>112</sup> The result of this reorganization of ANSESAL was that its formal dissolution did little to curb its role in “death squad” violence, as reformists on the junta had hoped. In fact, the “new ANSESAL” seems to have helped to direct violence against those very reformists, “operat[ing] as a political police against the Christian Democrats then in power and [doing] little else, according to military officials from the United States and El Salvador” (Pyes 1983: 8).<sup>113</sup>

Second, D’Aubuisson played a key role by providing intelligence to both private and military perpetrators of “death squad” violence. Before leaving the “new ANSESAL,” D’Aubuisson made copies for himself of many of the agency’s files on alleged subversives in El Salvador. He then shared these files with allies inside and outside the military, attempting to convince them of the communist infiltration of Salvadoran society and about the close links that supposedly existed between reformists and actual communists. As one ARENA founder later recalled: “He [D’Aubuisson] detailed the degree of Marxist infiltration in the universities, churches, unions, political parties and even the armed forces themselves. He had been an intelligence officer in the Salvadoran National Security Agency (ANSESAL).

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<sup>112</sup> D’Aubuisson may have even received a promotion during this period, going from deputy director of the “old ANSESAL” to full director of the “new ANSESAL,” after his old boss fled into exile in the aftermath of the coup. As McClintock (1985: 221) explains: “Threatened with the dissolution of both at the time of the October 1979 coup, the army general staff moved to conceal ANSESAL, and reorganize ORDEN to permit the minimum of disruption. According to recent reports, ANSESAL’s—and ORDEN’s—offices and records were transferred to the army general staff headquarters on the very day of the coup. Although ANSESAL chief Colonel Roberto Eulalio Santibañez, reportedly supervised the transfer, direction of ANSESAL from the army general staff was to have fallen to its previous second chief, Major Roberto D’Aubuisson. The appointment was kept secret from the civilians brought into the October [1979] junta, and from the reformist officers who had demanded that officers responsible for intelligence work under Romero be cashiered.” See also Anderson and Anderson (1986: 196).

<sup>113</sup> According to Stanley (1996: 167), D’Aubuisson played a direct role in the killings coordinated by the reorganized ANSESAL: “D’Aubuisson assisted the high command in transferring the political spying functions that had been carried out by ANSESAL over to the C-II (intelligence) section of the joint staff (Estado Mayor Conjunto). He also helped revive the operations aspects of ANSESAL (the actual killing) through a special ‘investigations’ section of the National Police, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Aristides Márquez, which began death squad operations in December 1979. The section went on to become the most notorious, and most effective, death squad organization in El Salvador.”



He had copies of documents and videos.”<sup>114</sup> In the words of another ARENA founder: “He [D’Aubuisson] had everything—photos and complete personal histories—direct from the ANSESAL files... The proofs he presented were concrete and irrefutable.”<sup>115</sup> As *The Los Angeles Times* reported, although he was now a civilian, D’Aubuisson remained in frequent contact with members of the armed forces: “D’Aubuisson worked closely with a group of roughly 20 mid-level officers who are believed by intelligence sources to have directed many of the killings. He also submitted intelligence reports to the high command, and moved freely in and out of military garrisons long after he was publicly identified with death squads.”<sup>116</sup> Colonel Nicolás Carranza, for example, who served as the vice minister of defense and later as director of the Treasury Police, admitted to one reporter that he used to meet regularly with D’Aubuisson in his home, and allowed him to visit military barracks to make his pitch.<sup>117</sup> As he explained: “I believe what he [D’Aubuisson] was doing was positive, not negative... There was no reason to persecute him while he was fighting Communists.”<sup>118</sup>

The most spectacular way that D’Aubuisson spread intelligence about alleged subversives was through a series of televised broadcasts beginning in early 1980. In these programs, D’Aubuisson would lecture about “communism” in El Salvador, which he claimed had infiltrated virtually every sphere of society, from the Catholic Church to the military itself. Because there was an early curfew in place at the time, D’Aubuisson

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<sup>114</sup> Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in Galeas (2011: 91).

<sup>115</sup> Major Oscar Serrato, quoted in Nairn (1984: 28).

<sup>116</sup> See Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’ ” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983. See also Pyes (1983: 7-8) and Arnson (2000: 94).

<sup>117</sup> See Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’ ” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

<sup>118</sup> Quoted in Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’ ” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

essentially had a captive national audience. As one U.S. diplomat recalled: “You couldn’t go out in those days [because of the curfew]... So you’d sit at home and watch the Major Bob show,” in which D’Aubuisson would “get up and rail against the Communist menace... It reminded me of Joe McCarthy.”<sup>119</sup> In making these televised denunciations, D’Aubuisson did not speak in abstractions. Instead, he named names and provided detailed information about alleged subversives: “D’Aubuisson got down to specifics, marshaling charts, photos, videotapes, and computer graphics for an intricately detailed, name-by-name, face-by-face tirade against ‘El Salvador’s terrorist conspiracy’ ” (Nairn 1984: 28). In case it was not clear how the military should respond to this information, D’Aubuisson egged them on, telling them, “Don’t ever feel guilty for having fought these subversives! [...] They have declared this war... You are heroes...you are national heroes!”<sup>120</sup> and asserting, “Nothing done to defend your country is against the law.”<sup>121</sup> Not surprisingly, some of those whom D’Aubuisson called out in this way were killed shortly thereafter. One prominent case was Mario Zamora, the attorney general and a Christian Democrat. A few days after D’Aubuisson denounced him, armed men entered his house while he was hosting a party and shot him ten times in the face.<sup>122</sup> Some of D’Aubuisson’s associates were coy about the intention of the broadcasts. In the words of one ARENA founder close to D’Aubuisson: “Unfortunately, when we mentioned a person, *poom*, they’d shoot them... Then they started linking us with the Death Squads. If by chance the army arrived and happened to shoot one

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<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’ ” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’ ” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Nairn (1984: 28).

<sup>122</sup> See Anderson and Anderson (1986: 194).

of these people in a battle, then everybody threw the blame on us.”<sup>123</sup> D’Aubuisson’s old mentor, General Medrano, was more frank: “D’Aubuisson was pointing out the communists so the troops could kill them.”<sup>124</sup>

Finally, D’Aubuisson played a direct role in the organization of “death squad” networks. Because of the clandestine nature of these networks, the evidence is inevitably fragmentary. Yet, multiple sources, including various U.S. government agencies and a host of investigative journalists, attest to D’Aubuisson’s role in organizing these networks and coordinating killings.<sup>125</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 7, one of D’Aubuisson’s most important contributions was to keep much of the ORDEN infrastructure intact. Despite its formal dissolution, much of the organization remained operational, with its former members widely accused of participating in “death squad” killings.<sup>126</sup> D’Aubuisson also created a new organization called the Broad National Front (FAN), which described itself as a “civic organization,” but which was linked to both attempted coups and “death squad” killings.

According to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the FAN was a “a semi-clandestine

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<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Nairn (1984: 28).

<sup>124</sup> Quoted in Nairn (1984: 28).

<sup>125</sup> For a summary of information about “death squad” killings in El Salvador contained in declassified U.S. documents, see Arnson (2000). Because El Salvador was such a topic of interest in the 1980s, the country received intense international press coverage. For a compilation of one influential series of newspaper articles, see Pyes (1983). See also Nairn (1984). For a sample of other influential articles, see Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983; Christopher Dickey, “The Truth About the Death Squads,” *The New Republic*, 26 December 1983; Douglas Farah, “Salvadoran Death Squads Threaten Resurgence,” *The Washington Post*, 28 August 1988. See also the 1993 report of the United Nations truth commission, *From Madness to Hope: the 12-Year War in El Salvador: Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador*: <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/ElSalvador-Report.pdf>. Accessed on 9 December 2013.

<sup>126</sup> According to Pyes (1983: 8), “[m]any of these killings have been traced to former members of ORDEN.” The CIA concurred, asserting that some “right-wing terrorist groups” were “probably drawn from the ranks of ORDEN” (quoted in Arnson 2000: 93). Similarly, one former U.S. ambassador asserted that the “death squad” group known as the White Hand (*Mano Blanca*) “was an offshoot of ORDEN, and the same people in ORDEN were to some extent the same people in the *Mano Blanco* [*sic*]. Even today, some of the same people are in the Death Squads” (quoted in Nairn 1984: 23). In her book-length study of death squads in Latin America, Mazzei (2009: 153) goes so far as to describe ORDEN as “the central nerve system of [El Salvador’s] death squads.”

political organization bent on overthrowing the reformist regime in San Salvador,” and that “used black market contacts to arm a small paramilitary organization in El Salvador that included both civilians and military personnel.”<sup>127</sup> D’Aubuisson was also directly involved in the assassination of Archbishop Óscar Romero, who was shot while giving Mass in March 1980.<sup>128</sup> D’Aubuisson not only seemed to issue a warning to Romero in one of his televised broadcasts,<sup>129</sup> but also appears to have been the main organizer of the actual killing. According to U.S. intelligence, D’Aubuisson organized a meeting of active-duty military officials, who proceeded to draw lots for the “privilege” of killing the archbishop.<sup>130</sup> Incredibly, even after forming ARENA and becoming an important national politician, D’Aubuisson continued to direct “death squad” operations from his position as president of the country’s constituent assembly. As Arnson (2000: 96) explains: “According to the CIA, the ARENA death squad [directed from the constituent assembly] consisted of 10 to 20

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<sup>127</sup> Quoted in Arnson (2000: 95). According to Pyes (1983: 9), “[b]eneath FAN was an underground network of civilian-military death squads.” Similarly, Stanley (1996: 163-164) asserts: “The FAN combined different roles in a way that was to characterize the Salvadoran civilian right for the next decade: it was designed to serve as a ‘civic organization’ to pressure the government, an intelligence organization to support loyal sectors of the military, and a paramilitary network to supplement the besieged hardline elements of the military. It funneled money—as much as \$10 million—to the security forces to support repressive operations.” FAN was also connected to coup attempts in February and May 1980 (Stanley: 190, 200-202).

<sup>128</sup> The assassination was the most dramatic episode in an ongoing campaign against “subversive” Catholic clergy. Since the late 1970s, Catholic clergy and lay workers had increasingly become targets for violence. Between March 1977 and June 1981, ten priests were killed and at least sixty were expelled or forced into exile (Montgomery 1995: 97). As part of this anti-Church campaign, one “death squad” group went so far as to adopt the slogan “Be a Patriot—Kill a Priest” (quoted in Paige 1997: 32; also Dunkerley 1982: 109).

<sup>129</sup> See Nairn (1984: 28).

<sup>130</sup> See Laurie Becklund, “Lots Reportedly Drawn to Kill Salvador Archbishop,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 15 April 1983. More evidence for D’Aubuisson’s role in the assassination was contained in documents found on him after being arrested in May 1980: “Among the documents captured at the time of D’Aubuisson’s arrest in May 1980 was one describing Operation Pineapple. The details of the operation—the equipment used, the number of people involved—matched the details of the archbishop’s assassination almost exactly” (LeoGrande 2000: 49-50). A truth commission came to the same conclusion: “Former Major Roberto D’Aubuisson gave the order to assassinate the Archbishop and gave precise instructions to members of his security service, acting as a ‘death squad,’ to organize and supervise the assassination.” For the full text of the 1993 report, *From Madness to Hope: the 12-Year War in El Salvador: Report of the Commission on the Truth for El Salvador*, see <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/ElSalvador-Report.pdf>. Accessed on 9 December 2013.

individuals drawn from the military, National Police, and Treasury Police, as well as selected civilians. It had as its principal targets members of the revolutionary left and the Christian Democratic Party.”

By its nature, the “death squad” strategy involves deniability, and thus, not surprisingly, ARENA members deny that D’Aubuisson was ever involved in extrajudicial killings. They admit to parts of the preceding account. They acknowledge, for example, that D’Aubuisson absconded with a large number of ANSESAL files,<sup>131</sup> and that he worked in close cooperation with active-duty members of the armed forces.<sup>132</sup> They deny, however, that D’Aubuisson was ever involved in “death squad” killings.<sup>133</sup> The official ARENA line is that all allegations against D’Aubuisson are lies and part of a vast international “smear campaign.”<sup>134</sup> In the words of one ARENA founder: “[The FMLN] and their entire global sounding board—because they are extremely cunning—generated such a horrible image of Roberto D’Aubuisson that he was converted into an international monster... [T]he communists are artists...they are specialists at destroying anyone on the basis of propaganda.”<sup>135</sup> The upshot is that, according to ARENA, the portrayal of D’Aubuisson as

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<sup>131</sup> See “Historia del Mayor Roberto d’Aubuisson,” <http://www.arena.com.sv/historia.html>. Accessed on 12 September 12, 2013.

<sup>132</sup> As one ARENA founder explained: “The Major met constantly with soldiers...and gave them all the proof he had in order to convince them” (author’s interview with ARENA founder, 29 October 2012).

<sup>133</sup> ARENA has always insisted that, at the very least, D’Aubuisson never killed anyone during peacetime. As one journalist reported: “Asked about his candidate’s reputation for settling disputes in blood, Mr. Redaelli grew serious. ‘I can tell you that Roberto d’Aubuisson never killed anyone in times of peace’ he said.” See Warren Hoge, “Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

<sup>134</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 8 October 2012.

<sup>135</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 12 October 2012.

a killer “was not the product of his being that way, but rather it was a deformation of political character manipulated by communism against capitalism.”<sup>136</sup>

It may be true that D’Aubuisson’s role in the violence that consumed El Salvador in the 1980s has been exaggerated. His mixture of extremely aggressive rhetoric and crude redbaiting made him an almost comically perfect villain, and thus had a certain propaganda value for the FMLN.<sup>137</sup> Focusing on D’Aubuisson was also convenient for the Christian Democrats and the United States, since this helped to deflect attention from the military, which, despite being responsible for much of the “death squad” violence, was under the nominal control of the Christian Democrats during much of the 1980s,<sup>138</sup> and which, as will be discussed in the next section, continued to receive massive amounts of aid from the United States. Nevertheless, ARENA’s hagiographic depiction of D’Aubuisson as a peace-loving democrat who dared to proclaim “ ‘the vote is the weapon of free men,’ while the communists cried in the mountains ‘revolution or death,’ ” is simply not credible.<sup>139</sup> It is almost certainly true that D’Aubuisson was not alone in coordinating “death squad” killings in El Salvador. Nevertheless, the evidence of his involvement in such killings is too overwhelming—and the notion of a vast conspiracy involving the FMLN, Catholic Church, United Nations, CIA and a host of international newspapers, too far-fetched—to believe

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<sup>136</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 12 October 2012.

<sup>137</sup> According to Joaquín Villalobos, an important FMLN guerrilla leader, D’Aubuisson’s negative propaganda value was such that they made the conscious decision not to assassinate him: “For us, D’Aubuisson was more useful alive than dead... ARENA, but particularly D’Aubuisson, had already completely lost the media battle, at least internationally, and that benefited us” (quoted in Galeas 2004: 31).

<sup>138</sup> After being elected president in 1984, Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte “signed a secret pact with the defense minister...which preserved the military’s institutional autonomy and overall direction of the war effort in exchange for its allegiance to the new government” (Williams and Seri 2003: 312).

<sup>139</sup> ARENA founder Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in Galeas (2011: 100). ARENA members frequently attribute to D’Aubuisson the saying “the vote is the weapon of free men.”

ARENA's claims about D'Aubuisson's innocence. During the 1980s, D'Aubuisson's range of political action would expand. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, he would not abandon his role in "death squad" killings; however, he would combine this form of action with a new one, the construction of a political party, ARENA.

### The Birth of ARENA

The Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) was born on 20 September 1981.<sup>140</sup> Its founder and undisputed leader was Roberto D'Aubuisson, who created the new party in anticipation of an imminent transition to an electoral regime. Since January 1980, when the first junta collapsed, El Salvador had been governed by a second junta composed of military officers and Christian Democrats. As described above, the actions of the Salvadoran state during this period had been rather schizophrenic: on the one hand, the post-1979 juntas announced significant reforms with the support of a segment of the armed forces; on the other, hard-line segments of the armed forces unleashed a wave of extreme violence with the aim of scuttling those reforms and discrediting the new authorities. Simultaneously, the FMLN became increasingly powerful, and the country descended into full-scale civil war. In December 1980, following a particularly gruesome act of violence—the torture, rape and murder of three U.S. nuns and a female Catholic lay worker<sup>141</sup>—the United States began to

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<sup>140</sup> D'Aubuisson officially announced his plan to create ARENA before a small group of supporters at an event held at the Hotel Cortijo Reforma in Guatemala City on 2 May 1981 (ARENA 2011: 30).

<sup>141</sup> See Anderson (1988: 103).

put significant pressure on El Salvador to introduce civilian rule and hold elections.<sup>142</sup> Days after these killings, José Napoleón Duarte, the Christian Democratic former mayor of San Salvador and opposition presidential candidate in 1972, became the “provisional president and head of the junta” (Anderson 1988: 112).<sup>143</sup> Over the next year, preparations were made for a transition to an electoral and fully civilian regime, and in December 1981, an election was called for a constituent assembly, to be held in March 1982.<sup>144</sup> This assembly would be tasked with electing a provisional president and writing a new democratic constitution. ARENA was created in order to contest this constituent assembly election.

D'Aubuisson's turn to parties was not his first choice. Instead, since the October 1979 coup, he had been working tirelessly to halt reforms and bring about a return to the *status quo ante* through violent, non-electoral means. As the U.S. Embassy explained in a 1981 cable, D'Aubuisson's objective was to “terrorize those who are still working for a moderate outcome, in or out of government, and to impose a rightist dictatorship.”<sup>145</sup> This goal was to be pursued in two ways. First, “death squad” killings on a massive scale would be unleashed against “subversives,” with D'Aubuisson favoring, according to the CIA, the

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<sup>142</sup> Following the murder of the nuns, U.S. aid to El Salvador was temporarily suspended, and pressure was put on the Salvadoran authorities to make concessions. The junta was reorganized and “the armed forces agreed to shift a dozen notorious rightists out of senior command posts,” though “[o]nly a few were ever actually reassigned” (LeoGrande 2000: 63). Shortly thereafter, U.S. aid resumed. See LeoGrande (2000: 62-63).

<sup>143</sup> Despite this reorganization of the junta, the military retained a significant role. Colonel Gutiérrez, the conservative officer on the junta, “became vice-president and retained the title of commander in chief of the military forces” (Anderson 1988: 104). Moreover, Colonel García, the conservative defense minister, retained his position (Anderson 1988: 104). The reformist military also lost out in this reshuffling: “The price of this reorganization [of the junta] was the political head of the progressive military leader, Colonel Adolfo Majano, who was forced off the junta and sent into exile” (LeoGrande 2000: 63).

<sup>144</sup> See Anderson (1988: 113) and Dunkerley (1988: 385).

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Arnson (2000: 94-95). The CIA agreed, asserting that the goal of D'Aubuisson and his backers was “to overthrow the present junta and return the country to right-wing military rule” (quoted in Arnson 2000: 94). Similarly, Wolf (1992: 12) writes of “D'Aubuisson's earlier hardline goal of restoring a mystical status quo ante.” According to Baloyra (1982: 109), “[t]he disloyal Right saw D'Aubuisson as a crusader for the restoration of...reactionary despotism in El Salvador.”



“physical elimination” of “anyone not supportive of the traditional status quo.”<sup>146</sup> Second, through a coup, D’Aubuisson hoped to put an end to the reformist experiment that had been underway since October 1979.<sup>147</sup> In February 1980, a coup plot by conservative officers and their civilian backers was foiled, in which D’Aubuisson appears to have been involved.<sup>148</sup> In May 1980, a second coup plot was foiled, this time with D’Aubuisson’s definite participation. Two days after the plot was exposed, he and several active-duty military officers were arrested while meeting on the outskirts of San Salvador. They were in possession of several incriminating documents containing detailed plans for a post-coup government (of which D’Aubuisson was to be a member), as well as information related to “death squad” activities and the assassination of Archbishop Romero.<sup>149</sup> A few days later, D’Aubuisson and the other coup-plotters were released by the military prosecutor responsible for the case, ostensibly for lack of evidence.<sup>150</sup> After being released, D’Aubuisson fled into temporary exile in neighboring Guatemala.

D’Aubuisson’s turn from coup-plotting to party-building was directly related to a change in U.S. foreign policy. The United States had a long history of supporting friendly dictators in Central America, including El Salvador. During the presidency of Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), however, this began to change. Rejecting what he described as previous

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<sup>146</sup> Quoted in Arnson (2000: 94).

<sup>147</sup> See Christopher Dickey, “Rightist Says U.S. Would Back Ouster Of Civilians From Salvadoran Regime; Rightist Urges Takeover By Military in El Salvador,” *The Washington Post*, 4 March 1981; “D’Aubuisson: Coup Advocate,” *The Washington Post*, 9 March 1981.

<sup>148</sup> In the press, he was frequently alleged to have participated in the February coup attempt. See, for example, “Rightist Says U.S. Would Back Ouster Of Civilians From Salvadoran Regime; Rightist Urges Takeover By Military in El Salvador,” *The Washington Post*, 4 March 1981; “D’Aubuisson: Coup Advocate,” *The Washington Post*, 9 March 1981. See also Anderson (1988: 95) and Dunkerley (1988: 383).

<sup>149</sup> See McClintock (1985: 272-273), Anderson (1988: 98) and Stanley (1996: 201-202).

<sup>150</sup> See Christopher Dickey, “Suspects in Plot Freed in El Salvador,” *The Washington Post*, 15 May 1980.

administrations' "inordinate fear of Communism,"<sup>151</sup> Carter opted to build his foreign policy around a new priority: human rights. The military leaders of El Salvador's old regime balked at this new concern and, in 1977, "El Salvador joined Guatemala, Brazil, and Argentina in rejecting further military assistance [from the U.S.] rather than submit to an evaluation of their human rights record" (LeoGrande 2000: 38). The overthrow of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua in July 1979 created a challenge for U.S. foreign policymakers: "In Washington, the fall of Somoza conjured up images of toppling dominoes in Central America and prompted a major review of U.S. policy to prevent similar guerrilla victories in El Salvador and Guatemala" (LeoGrande 2000: 33). The Carter administration was concerned about human rights, but it was also not willing to let El Salvador become "another Nicaragua" (LeoGrande 2000: 43). This did not lead, however, to a full-scale abandonment of Carter's foreign policy and the re-embrace of military hardliners in El Salvador. Instead, the Carter administration believed that revolution in El Salvador could only be averted through a multifaceted approach that combined both a military build-up and the promotion of deep structural reforms. As the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State explained: "Change cannot be avoided... Defense of the status quo cannot prevent it or cap instability for long; it can only radicalize the dynamics at work... The central issue is not whether change is to occur, but whether the change is to be violent and radical, or peaceful and evolutionary."<sup>152</sup> This thinking was similar to that of the organizers of the October 1979 coup. Thus, when the coup occurred, the Carter administration was supportive, with the U.S. ambassador cabling

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<sup>151</sup> Quoted in LeoGrande (2000: 16).

<sup>152</sup> Quoted in LeoGrande (2000: 33). Robert E. White, whom President Carter appointed as U.S. ambassador to El Salvador in January 1980, was also very sympathetic to this view, declaring at one point: "What Latin America desperately needs is a non-Communist model for revolution" (quoted in LeoGrande 2000: 43).

that the new government was composed of “highly acceptable figures,” and that its program was “very much in keeping with our own ideals and objectives.”<sup>153</sup>

During the remainder of Carter’s term, the United States would maintain an awkward balancing act that Archbishop Romero denounced as “reform with repression.”<sup>154</sup> On the one hand, the U.S. resumed military aid to El Salvador, despite its appalling human rights record and the explosion of “death squad” killings after the October 1979 coup.<sup>155</sup> Military aid, it was thought, was not only essential if the Salvadoran military was to stand any chance of defeating the armed left, but would also give the U.S. greater leverage over Salvadoran officials.<sup>156</sup> On the other hand, the U.S. became a steadfast defender of the new junta and its raft of ambitious structural reforms. In fact, it was only because of “intense U.S. pressure” that conservative members of the military allowed the passage of significant reforms, such as the nationalization of the banking system and agrarian reform (LeoGrande 2000: 42). More fundamentally, U.S. pressure played a key role in ensuring the *survival* of the post-1979 juntas. Indeed, during the coup attempts of February and May 1980, “[o]nly the influence of the United States preserved [the junta]” (LeoGrande 2000: 43). U.S. ambassador Robert E. White was particularly important in preventing these coup attempts

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<sup>153</sup> Quoted in LeoGrande (2000: 41). However, the United States quickly became concerned about the new junta’s embrace of the radical left: “[W]hile Washington favored social reform, it balked at the junta’s willingness to bring elements of the radical left into partnership with the government. The Carter administration’s strategy was to isolate the radical left, not allow it to share power” (LeoGrande 2000: 41).

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in LeoGrande (2000: 42).

<sup>155</sup> As noted above, the United States temporarily suspended aid to El Salvador following the murder of three U.S. nuns and a female Catholic lay worker. In theory, military aid was not to be resumed until an investigation of the murders was carried out, even though, “[i]n private, U.S. officials had no doubt that the Salvadoran armed forces were involved in covering up the murders if not actually committing them” (LeoGrande 2000: 62). However, military aid was resumed anyway only a few weeks later in the face of the FMLN’s declaration of a “final offensive.” See Anderson (1988: 103), Carothers (1991: 15-16) and LeoGrande (2000: 62-63).

<sup>156</sup> As one U.S. official explained: “What we have to do...is wean the military off the teat of the oligarchy and onto ours” (Quoted in LeoGrande 2000: 44).

from succeeding: “[D]espite coup attempts in February and May 1980, the right had been unable to depose the regime, largely because of the unflagging efforts of Ambassador White to prop it up” (LeoGrande 2000: 58). All of this earned Carter the intense hatred of Salvadoran rightists, whom they help responsible for creeping “communism” in their country.<sup>157</sup> They were thus elated when Ronald Reagan won the November 1980 U.S. presidential election, and were certain that the new president’s policy toward El Salvador would be completely different from that of his predecessor.<sup>158</sup>

But it wasn’t. In fact, there was significant continuity between Carter and Reagan with respect to El Salvador, with both administrations essentially embracing the “reform with repression” formula. Based on this campaign rhetoric, “when the Reagan administration took power in 1981, most observers expected it to drop the Carter administration’s emphasis on human rights and democracy and pursue a purely realpolitik, security-oriented policy” (Carothers 1991: 6).<sup>159</sup> Once in office, however, Reagan’s administration followed Carter’s cue and “attempted to prevent the spread of leftism through a multifaceted policy that combined military assistance, economic assistance, and efforts to promote elected civilian governments” (Carothers 1991: 5). To be sure, there were differences, particularly with respect to the scale of U.S. military assistance, which reached

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<sup>157</sup> This hatred of Jimmy Carter was widespread among Central American elites, with one Guatemalan dictator going so far as to describe him as “Jimmy Castro” (quoted in LeoGrande 2000: 57).

<sup>158</sup> See LeoGrande (2000: 56-57).

<sup>159</sup> Moreover, Reagan had made it clear that El Salvador would be among his top foreign policy priorities. As Carothers (1991: 16) explains: “For President Reagan and his top advisers, El Salvador was not a civil war in a small, remote country, but a geostrategic crisis of major proportions. It was the hottest flashpoint of the perceived Soviet-Cuban campaign to spread communism throughout Central America.”

unprecedented levels under Reagan.<sup>160</sup> Yet, despite this massive injection of military aid, there was no attempt to undermine the post-1979 juntas, roll back reforms already decreed or return power to ousted hardliners from the old regime.<sup>161</sup> In addition, the Reagan administration made it clear from the outset that it would continue the Carter administration's policy of opposing coups, with the interim U.S. ambassador declaring in March 1981: "[W]e oppose a coup or anyone who seeks to change the Duarte government."<sup>162</sup> In fact, Reagan went even further than the Carter administration, pushing for elections and then funneling millions of dollars to the Christian Democrats in an effort to defeat rightists seeking to turn back the clock, particularly ARENA.<sup>163</sup>

The United States' promotion of structural reform and elections in El Salvador, and its clear bias in favor of the Christian Democrats—under both Carter *and* Reagan—had two major effects on the Salvadoran right. First, it gave rise to a brand of intense anti-Americanism that is more commonly found on the left in Latin America. ARENA was the principal exponent of this anti-Americanism. ARENA leaders were furious about U.S.

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<sup>160</sup> In March 1981, for example, the U.S. State Department announced an emergency grant of \$25 million of military assistance, which was "greater than all previous U.S. military assistance to El Salvador from 1946 to 1980 *combined*, as well as more than the total U.S. military assistance to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981" (Carothers 1991: 17). This amount would increase several times over in the next few years. For more on U.S. military aid to El Salvador, see Walter and Williams (1993: 62-63, 68).

<sup>161</sup> This continuity between Regan and Carter was the product of moderates in the administration who "shared the Carter administration's conviction that the reforms were crucial to lessening the domestic causes of political dissatisfaction in El Salvador," who in turn persuaded hardliners in the administration to support their position, "if only for reasons of pure expediency (that is, pleasing Congress)" (Carothers 1991: 25). ARENA had a different interpretation. As ARENA founder Guillermo Sol Bang explained: "Despite the fact that President Reagan clearly identified more closely with our way of thinking and our proposals, the bureaucracy of the State Department and [Reagan's] advisors insisted that the best way to defeat the guerrillas was by supporting the PDC... The campaign of the U.S. left, which had infiltrated the Democrat Party, the Washington bureaucracy and religious groups, against our leader, Roberto d'Aubuisson, had an impact on the decisions of the Reagan government" (quoted in Galeas 2011: 104).

<sup>162</sup> Quoted in Christopher Dickey, "American Embassy Target of Shooting," *The Washington Post*, 5 March 1981.

<sup>163</sup> For a critical analysis of these "demonstration elections," see Herman and Brodhead (1984).

support for the post-1979 juntas and, as discussed in Chapter 7, some proffered conspiracy theories to explain this behavior. In addition, many were simply offended by the attitude of U.S. officials, which they viewed as imperialistic and arrogant. They objected to what they saw as the United States' use of El Salvador as a "guinea pig" for testing newfangled theories of social reform and counterinsurgency.<sup>164</sup> One ARENA founder recalls that U.S. Ambassador Robert White acted as though he were "proconsul" and displayed "an unbearable arrogance and insolence."<sup>165</sup> All of this contributed to the emergence of "ARENA's nationalist, anti-U.S. credo" (Norton 1991: 208) and led to frequent "[a]nti-gringo rhetoric" (Stanley 1996: 241). Two observers who studied ARENA in the late 1980s wrote that "ARENA rallies are among the most visibly anti-Yankee events in Latin America, with angry crowds screaming slogans against 'blonds' and 'gringo whores,' " and shouting " 'GRINGOS EAT SHIT!' " at the foreign press (Miles and Ostertag 1989: 21, 15). This anti-Americanism went beyond rhetoric. For example, after D'Aubuisson's arrest in May 1980, hundreds of protesters surrounded the U.S. embassy, accusing Ambassador White of being a communist and chanting, "White is Red."<sup>166</sup> White escaped days later when U.S. marines fired teargas at the protesters, prompting gunmen to strafe the embassy with machine-gun fire later that day. This treatment of U.S. ambassadors extended to Reagan appointees. In May 1984, U.S. officials uncovered an advanced plot to assassinate Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering, which they believed that D'Aubuisson was organizing.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> The term "guinea pig" is often used by ARENA leaders. See Panamá (2005: 43) and author's interview with national ARENA leader, 26 September 2012, and with another national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>165</sup> Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in in Galeas (2011: 89).

<sup>166</sup> For a description of these events, see LeoGrande (2000: 58).

<sup>167</sup> See Doyle McManus and Craig Pyes, "Assassination Plot on U.S. Envoy to Salvador Reported," *The Los Angeles Times*, 23 June 1984; Joanne Omang, "U.S. Feared Slaying of Envoy Here: Pickering Given Heavy

Later in the year, believing that this plot against Pickering was again underway, the Reagan administration decided to pull him out of El Salvador and appoint a new ambassador.<sup>168</sup>

The second and, for the purposes of this study, most consequential effect of U.S. policy was to compel the Salvadoran right to turn seriously to party-building.<sup>169</sup> To be sure, much of this turn was the result of the October 1979 coup and the new junta's initiation of structural reforms. No longer able to depend on the military for protection, the right would now have to defend itself through other means.<sup>170</sup> ARENA is surprisingly frank about this point, stating on its website: "The right, which for almost 50 years [had] had the armed forces as a loyal defender of its interests, now found itself obligated to organize itself and participate in politics directly."<sup>171</sup> However, it was only after the United States made it clear that it would not tolerate a counter-coup to restore some version of the old regime that conservative party-building began in earnest. The fact that this policy against coups was the position of both Carter *and* Reagan meant that it could not be dismissed as the aberrant behavior of one president, but instead constituted a deeper shift in U.S. foreign policy. In short, rightists in El Salvador became party-builders because alternative means of interest representation had been definitively closed to them. The logic they followed was thus the opposite of the one described by Goodwin (2001) in his study of armed revolutionary groups. In that study, Goodwin (2001) argues that people form such groups form when the

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Guard on Washington Visit," *The Washington Post*, 27 June 1984. See also Arnson (2000: 105).

<sup>168</sup> See LeoGrande (2000: 251).

<sup>169</sup> For a similar argument, see Stanley (2006: 106).

<sup>170</sup> In his study of the private sector in the 1980s, Gaspar (1989: 44) writes that Salvadoran elites had become "political orphans."

<sup>171</sup> See "Historia del Mayor Roberto d'Aubuisson," from official ARENA website: <http://www.arena.com.sv/historia.html>. Accessed on 12 September 2013.

political system becomes so violent and obviously closed that they feel there is simply no other option—or, as he puts it, “no other way out.”<sup>172</sup> In El Salvador, rightists came to a similarly desperate conclusion, but with a very different result: there was “no other way *in*.” Coups and right-wing military rule had been definitively taken off the table; if they wished to advance their interests within the new political system, they would have to form a party.

U.S. pressure from also helped to convince the right of the need to build a *serious* party. This was because the United States did not just favor elections, but also favored a particular party: the Christian Democrats. In the 1982 constituent assembly election, for example, the CIA secretly funneled approximately \$2 million to support the Christian Democrats; in the 1984 presidential election, it again funneled around \$2 million to the Christian Democratic candidacy of José Napoleón Duarte.<sup>173</sup> This assistance to the Christian Democrats was coupled with an active effort to undermine ARENA. For example, in the 1982 election, the CIA helped to produce “a multicolored comic book that portrayed ARENA supporters as fat cats in limousines,” then “air-dropped the comics into areas where support for the government was weak” (LeoGrande 2000: 160). The Reagan administration made it abundantly clear that an ARENA victory would be unacceptable to the United States, and would threaten the flow of U.S. military and economic assistance to

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<sup>172</sup> In Goodwin’s (2001: 3) words: “Revolutionary movements are not simply or exclusively a response to economic exploitation or inequality, but also and more directly a response to political oppression and violence, typically brutal and indiscriminate.” Goodwin (2001: 26) borrows the expression “no other way out” from Leon Trotsky.

<sup>173</sup> See LeoGrande (2000: 160, 249). This prompted U.S. Senator Jesse Helms, ARENA’s closest ally in the U.S. Congress, to write a letter to Reagan after the 1984 presidential election in El Salvador demanding that U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering be fired for trying to “rig the electoral outcome” in favor of Christian Democratic candidate José Napoleón Duarte (quoted in LeoGrande 2000: 250). On 8 May 1984, Helms gave a speech on the Senate floor in which he asserted: “The State Department and the CIA bought the election for Duarte. Mr. Pickering was merely the purchasing agent” (quoted in LeoGrande 2000: 250).



El Salvador.<sup>174</sup> The U.S. government also denied D'Aubuisson entry visas to the United States on multiple occasions,<sup>175</sup> and openly intervened to prevent D'Aubuisson from being named the provisional president of El Salvador following the March 1982 constituent assembly elections.<sup>176</sup> These interventions made it clear that if the right were to have any hope of defeating the superpower-backed Christian Democrats, it would have to build not just a party, but one strong enough to win even in the face of U.S. hostility. The success of this party-building effort, in the form of ARENA, will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Why did D'Aubuisson and his followers choose to form ARENA, a new party, rather than try to work through the Party of National Conciliation (PCN), the “official” party of the old regime? This possibility was considered, but quickly rejected. According to an official history of ARENA, “some of those closest to D'Aubuisson recommended that he rescue and reorient the Party of National Conciliation [PCN], which had remained in bad shape after the [October 1979] coup against the old structures. But this never seemed right to D'Aubuisson, believing, as the old popular saying went, that it was ‘easier to give birth to

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<sup>174</sup> See Loren Jenkins, “U.S. Envoy Indicates Extremist Win Could Peril Aid to Salvador,” *The Washington Post*, 17 March 1982.

<sup>175</sup> See Karen DeYoung, “Salvadoran Rightist Eludes Ban Against Entering U.S.,” *The Washington Post*, 2 July 1980; Robert J. McCartney, “Salvadorans Say U.S. Is Trying to Thwart Rightist; Salvadorans See U.S. Warning in Denial of Visa,” *The Washington Post*, 1 December 1983.

<sup>176</sup> ARENA came in second place in the March 1982 election, after the Christian Democrats. However, ARENA and the PCN, the “official” party of the old regime, together won a majority of seats in the constituent assembly, and thus could have voted to make D'Aubuisson the country's provisional president. Only U.S. intervention prevented this outcome: “Various high-level officials, including the Speaker of the US House of Representatives and the head of the US Southern Command travelled to El Salvador and explained to the Salvadoran military that D'Aubuisson was unacceptable; the [Salvadoran military] high command in turn explained this to D'Aubuisson, who withdrew from consideration for the presidency. Thus US democracy promotion efforts got off to a rocky start with an overtly non-democratic intervention to head off an extreme right-wing takeover” (Stanley 2006: 104). Alvaro Magaña, a much less controversial figure, was instead named as provisional president as a “consensus” candidate, while D'Aubuisson became president of the constituent assembly. See also Carothers (1991: 46) and LeoGrande (2000: 247).

a child than to revive the dead' ” (ARENA 2011: 27). In other words, the PCN brought with it considerable authoritarian baggage and relatively little authoritarian inheritance.

In terms of authoritarian baggage, the PCN was resented not only by opponents of the old regime, but also by some of the old regime's supporters. The reason was that, despite its having been, on balance, highly effective at protecting the interests of economic elites, the PCN had also contained reformist strands and occasionally pushed for mild changes to the *status quo*.<sup>177</sup> Disaffected elites did not bear such reformist attempts passively; instead, they resisted them in various ways. Sometimes, for example, they would support non-official presidential candidates—which, given the virtual impossibility of anyone other than the PCN candidate winning, was viewed more as a means of lobbying the regime than of mounting serious electoral bids.<sup>178</sup> In 1972, for example, some elites backed the candidacy of General José Alberto Medrano, the retired founder of ORDEN and ANSESAL, who during the campaign accused the PCN of being “a corrupt band infiltrated by communists.”<sup>179</sup> The last and most serious cycle of reform and resistance occurred in 1976 when the PCN government of Colonel Arturo Armando Molina attempted to carry out a modest land reform. This provoked an intense, organized reaction from economic elites, with “[c]onservative opposition even includ[ing] death squad attacks against PCN functionaries working on agrarian issues” (Lindo-Fuentes and Ching 2012: 223). While Molina was eventually forced to back down and abandon the land reform, the episode provided elites with one more piece of evidence that the PCN was not an altogether

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<sup>177</sup> See Stanley (1996); Johnson (1998: 126-128); and Lindo-Fuentes and Ching (2012).

<sup>178</sup> See Dunkerley (1982: 72-73) and Millett (1992: 59).

<sup>179</sup> Quoted in Dunkerley (1982: 105).

trustworthy ally.<sup>180</sup> During the 1980s, the PCN continued to provide fuel for such suspicions, marketing itself as a “social democratic” (Eguizábal 1992: 142; Gaspar 1989: 76) party in an attempt to win new supporters.<sup>181</sup> In fact, it openly “[d]istanc[ed] itself from the economically dominant sectors which it blamed for the failure of past reform attempts, [and] adopted a paternalistic attitude toward the popular and revolutionary sectors, sympathizing with their frustration but not with their methods” (Johnson 1993: 185).<sup>182</sup> All of this meant that the PCN brand was of dubious value: it was completely repellant to opponents of the old regime, while producing mixed feelings among the old regime’s supporters.

If the PCN brought with it considerable baggage, there was little reason to think that this would be offset by authoritarian inheritance. As discussed above, the PCN was just one of several entities that the military had created to support its rule, and arguably not even the most important one. Despite its aspiration to become a Salvadoran version of Mexico’s PRI, the PCN was not a particularly strong organization. Indeed, it “never developed a permanent party structure, essentially disappearing between elections” (Stanley 1996: 74). By the late 1970s, “the official party, the National Conciliation Party, was in almost complete disarray, especially in rural areas, where it had been largely supplanted by the paramilitary elements of ORDEN and the ‘territorial’ militias” (Stanley 1996: 127). ARENA leaders recall that following the 1979 coup, the PCN was seen as “worn out”<sup>183</sup> and “dead.”<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> For similar arguments, see Gaspar (1989: 83) and Stanley (2006: 106).

<sup>181</sup> According to Baloyra (1982: 179), “the PCN retains a somewhat more pragmatic outlook than does ARENA, and although basically a conservative party, it is not as ideological or as impassioned as ARENA.”

<sup>182</sup> The feeling seems to have been mutual. Reflecting on the results of the March 1982 constituent assembly election, in which the PCN underperformed relative to ARENA, Baloyra (1982: 177) asserted that “it is likely that the PCN lost its most reactionary element to ARENA.”

<sup>183</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 6 November 2012.

As an important official in the pre-1979 military regime, D'Aubuisson must have had a good sense of how elections had really been won in the old days—and, by extension, which vestiges of the old regime would be most useful for winning elections in the future. This knowledge stemmed not only from his work in ANSESAL and dealings with ORDEN, but also from his experience in the 1972 presidential election, when D'Aubuisson “served as the coordinator for the Molina campaign in the eastern zone of the country” (Stanley 1996: 88). Based on this insider’s knowledge, D'Aubuisson seems to have concluded that the real organizational core of the old regime was not the PCN; it was ORDEN.<sup>185</sup> Because the PCN had failed to prevent the October 1979 coup, and subsequently to protect ORDEN from dissolution and its members from violent reprisals by the armed left, the future founders of ARENA believed that ORDEN members had soured on the PCN,<sup>186</sup> which would weaken the PCN’s prospects. As one ARENA founder explained: “We were surprised...to discover how Roberto [D'Aubuisson] had studied perfectly well the formation of the PCN and the reason why its end was foreseeable given the betrayal of the people of ORDEN, which for years had maintained the terrorists under control” (Panamá 2005: 111). Based on these considerations, D'Aubuisson seems to have calculated that it was wiser to

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<sup>184</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 8 October 2012.

<sup>185</sup> This was certainly the view of ARENA founder David Ernesto Panamá Sandoval (2005: 152), who writes: “The PCN was always a purely electoral party and based the election of its candidates on the convenience of the military hierarchy. It never had an ideology that defined it, much less that it transferred to its bases. It was of great utility to this party that General Alberto Medrano founded ORDEN in order to stop...the communist advance in Latin America.” Elsewhere, Panamá (2005: 45) writes that ORDEN’s “function was to halt communist penetration and also to generate votes for the PCN, the party of government.”

<sup>186</sup> As one ARENA founder explains: “The publication of the decree ordering [ORDEN’s] dissolution had the effect of removing the support of the armed forces for ORDEN, and it paved the way for the terrorists. Tens of thousands of peasants were executed by the terrorists and neither the PCN, nor the military, nor big business offered support to these humble defenders of democracy and freedom” (Panamá 2005: 45). This reference to “tens of thousands” of ORDEN members killed is almost certainly a gross exaggeration, though there was significant violence against ORDEN members by the armed left after the October 1979 coup.

construct a new party on the remnants of ORDEN—the real organizational prize left over from the old regime—than try to revive the wilted PCN. This gamble seems to have paid off. To be sure, the PCN remained a significant actor following the transition to electoral and civilian rule, winning an average of 9.8 percent of the vote in legislative elections between 1982 and 2012.<sup>187</sup> ARENA’s electoral performance, however, was in an altogether different league. It won an average of 37.9 percent in legislative elections between 1982 and 2012,<sup>188</sup> and became El Salvador’s “dominant party” (Wood 2000a: 223).

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the origins of ARENA, and demonstrated that the party had roots in the pre-1979 authoritarian regime. ARENA’s founder was Roberto D’Aubuisson, who had been the deputy director of ANSESAL, the regime’s powerful domestic intelligence agency. In this capacity, D’Aubuisson had played an important role in monitoring and meting out repression against suspected “subversives.” After the October 1979 coup, he continued to be involved in large-scale violence, albeit now as a coordinator of “deaths squads” rather than as part of the formal security apparatus. In late 1981, he formed ARENA in anticipation of an imminent transition to electoral and civilian rule. Because D’Aubuisson had been a high-level member of the security apparatus in the old regime, ARENA meets the definition of an authoritarian successor party, albeit as more of a

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<sup>187</sup> Author’s calculations based on data from Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas: <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/elecddata/elecddata.html>. Accessed on 30 June 2014.

<sup>188</sup> Author’s calculations based on data from Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas: <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/elecddata/elecddata.html>. Accessed on 30 June 2014.

borderline case than some other authoritarian successor parties.<sup>189</sup> The history of ARENA's formation has striking parallels with Chile's UDI (see Chapters 3 and 4). Like the UDI, ARENA was created by a former high-level authoritarian incumbent after being displaced from power, and thus was an example of what I call an "inside-out" party. In Chile, this displacement was the result of a factional shuffle within the regime in response to the 1982-1983 debt crisis. In El Salvador, it was the result of the October 1979 coup, which did not immediately put an end to military rule, but did put an end to the old regime and lead to the marginalization of many hardliners. Finding himself on the outside, D'Aubuisson turned first to "death squad" violence and coup-plotting. However, after the coup option was definitively taken off the table by U.S. pressure, he and his supporters concluded that there was "no other way in"—that is, no other way back into power—than by forming a party. The party that D'Aubuisson formed, ARENA, would go on to enjoy extraordinary success under democracy. In the next chapter, I provide an explanation for that success.

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<sup>189</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 7, ARENA was not as much of a magnet for former regime officials as Chile's UDI, nor did it embrace the legacy of the old regime to the same degree. Thus, while it meets the minimum definition of an authoritarian successor party, it is something of a borderline case. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 7, ARENA clearly benefited from authoritarian inheritance.

## CHAPTER 7

### El Salvador's ARENA: Authoritarian Inheritance and Party-Building Success

In Chapter 6, I examined the origins of ARENA, and demonstrated that its founder, Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, had been a high-level official in the previous military regime and played a central role in the explosion of “death squad” violence after October 1979. D'Aubuisson also participated in two failed coup attempts against the military-civilian juntas that took power after the 1979 coup. Given this history, many observers were initially skeptical about ARENA's prospects. In the U.S. Embassy, for example, the consensus was reportedly that “[D'Aubuisson is] just a right-wing extremist. He can't get any support.”<sup>1</sup> It quickly became clear, however, that ARENA was a serious electoral force. In its debut election of March 1982, the party did extremely well, winning 29.3 percent of the vote, and in subsequent electoral cycles, it did even better (see Figure 7.1). Because of its consistently strong performance in legislative elections, ARENA easily crossed the threshold for successful party-building used in this study. It also dominated presidential elections, holding the presidency uninterruptedly between 1989 and 2009.<sup>2</sup> Reflecting on the party's strong performance in 1982, one ARENA founder asserted: “ARENA did in five months what it takes most Salvadoran political parties at least five years to do.”<sup>3</sup> What allowed ARENA to catapult to electoral success so quickly, and once there, to avoid the schisms that brought down other new conservative parties, such as Guatemala's PAN (see Chapter 8)?

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Christopher Dickey, “Salvadoran Rightist Mounts Vigorous Election Campaign,” *The Washington Post*, 7 February 1982.

<sup>2</sup> In 2009, ARENA was finally defeated in a presidential election by FMLN candidate Mauricio Funes. See Colburn (2009) and Galeas and Galeas (2009).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Pyes (1983: 38).

In this chapter, I examine the success of ARENA and argue that it can be explained by authoritarian inheritance. While ARENA's links to the old regime and role in "death squad" violence undoubtedly made it unattractive to many Salvadorans, its status as an authoritarian successor party also allowed it to inherit a number of valuable resources. This inheritance was crucial for enabling it to overcome the main challenge faced by all conservative parties: the construction of a multiclass electoral coalition. It also helped ARENA to avoid the devastating schisms that contributed to the failure of other new parties, such as Guatemala's PAN (see Chapter 8). In this chapter, I identify four forms of authoritarian inheritance from which ARENA benefited. First, ARENA inherited a robust territorial organization in the form of ORDEN, the officially disbanded paramilitary organization from the pre-1979 military regime. This provided the party with a mass-based, nationwide organization whose membership was poor and ideologically right-wing. Second, ARENA inherited a popular and well-known brand in the form of "*D'Aubuissonismo*," which consisted of virulent anti-communism and the prescription of a no-holds-barred military solution to the country's civil war. While part of the brand's appeal stemmed from D'Aubuisson's personal charisma, it was also rooted in his background as a high-ranking ANSESAL officer, and thus the notion that he had access to privileged information about the "communist" conspiracy against El Salvador. D'Aubuisson's military contacts also helped him to avoid capture and broadcast his message on television, which was crucial for launching his political career. Third, ARENA inherited a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. ARENA views its history as an extension of the struggle against "communism" that began in the early 1930s, and that provided the justification for military rule. In this struggle, ARENA leaders believe they were the victims of terrible persecution,



and in fact, several of their early leaders were assassinated or suffered other forms of violence. This produced a strong sense of mission and camaraderie among party members, which helped ARENA to avoid schisms. Finally, ARENA inherited business connections. Because of D'Aubuisson's reputation as a trustworthy hardliner from the old regime, and the fact that he became one of the most aggressive opponents of the post-1979 juntas, his movement enjoyed the support of the business community from the outset. This support proved lasting, and gave ARENA a spending advantage during elections that was an important contributor to the party's success.

In order to make this argument about the impact of authoritarian inheritance on ARENA's success, I divide this chapter into four sections. In the first section, I examine the basic characteristics of ARENA under democracy. I demonstrate that, like the other parties examined in this study, it was ideologically right-wing and was a conservative party according to Gibson's (1996) sociological definition. However, I demonstrate that it differed from some other parties—particularly Guatemala's PAN (see Chapter 8)—in two key respects. First, while both parties enjoyed strong electoral performances, only ARENA was able to *sustain* its success over time; the PAN, in contrast, was a “flash party.” Second, ARENA was an authoritarian successor party, while the PAN was not. In the second section, I ask why the most important new conservative party in El Salvador took the form of an authoritarian successor party, and argue that this can be explained by one of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: the level of threat after the fall of the old regime. In the third and longest section, I examine the various forms of authoritarian inheritance from which ARENA benefited, and argue that these were instrumental in the party's success. Finally, I briefly consider three alternative explanations for ARENA's success: (1) assistance from the

military, (2) the decline of the Christian Democrats and (3) Alfredo Cristiani's ascent to the party presidency. I argue that while each probably gave ARENA an electoral boost, the most important cause of the party's success was authoritarian inheritance.

### ARENA under Democracy

Between 1982 and 1994, El Salvador made a transition to democracy. As discussed in Chapter 6, an important background condition was the October 1979 coup, which ended the previous military regime but did not immediately initiate a transition to democracy. Over the next two and half years, a series of civilian-military juntas held power, and the country descended into civil war. In March 1982, under pressure from the United States, elections were held for a constituent assembly. This assembly was tasked with writing a new democratic constitution; it would also elect a provisional president and temporarily serve as the country's legislature. In 1984, presidential elections were held under the new constitution, followed by legislative elections in 1985. El Salvador's regime during these years was not fully democratic. Because of the *de facto* proscription of the left and the tutelary powers that the military maintained over civilian rulers, it is more accurate to describe it as a "hybrid regime" (Karl 1995).<sup>4</sup> Despite these serious shortcomings, elections were more competitive than at any point in Salvadoran history, with multiple parties participating in intensely fought races.<sup>5</sup> In 1992, peace accords between the Salvadoran state

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<sup>4</sup> See also Herman and Brodhead (1984) and Karl (1986).

<sup>5</sup> See Baloyra (1993).

and FMLN guerrillas were signed, with the latter becoming a political party.<sup>6</sup> In 1994, a general election was held in which the FMLN was allowed to participate, and El Salvador became a full democracy. ARENA participated in all elections from 1982 onward. During its life, it faced two major partisan competitors: the centrist Christian Democrats (PDC) and the leftist FMLN. As discussed in Chapter 6, the PDC had been the main opposition party in the pre-1979 military regime, and in early 1980 it joined the civil-military junta. In 1984, PDC leader José Napoleón Duarte was elected president, and in 1985, the PDC won a massive victory in legislative elections. During the 1990s, the PDC experienced a dramatic electoral decline, which was caused by several factors (see below). From 1994 onward, El Salvador's party system was anchored by two major parties—ARENA and the FMLN—though the PDC survived as a minor party, as did the PCN, the “official” party of the old regime.

Ideologically, ARENA was located on the right of the political spectrum. There is a consensus among scholars that, in its early years, ARENA was not just right-wing, but a party of the “extreme right.”<sup>7</sup> The press used similar language, describing it as “far-right,” “ultra-rightist” or even “the feudal right.”<sup>8</sup> At the heart of ARENA's early ideology was rabid anti-communism and virulent opposition to the economic reforms carried out by the post-1979 juntas, such as land reform and bank nationalization. These positions made ARENA right-wing on both the socioeconomic dimension and the dimension that Ostiguy

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<sup>6</sup> Much has been written on the 1992 peace accords. See, for example, Vickers (1992); Stahler-Sholk (1994); Holiday and Stanley (1993); and Stanley (2007). On the FMLN's transformation into a party, see Allison (2006).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Anderson (1988: 94), Wood (2000a: 243) and Artiga (2001: 142). For similar descriptions, see García (1989: 73), Gaspar (1989: 80), Norton (1991: 201) and Middlebrook (2000b: 39).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Kenneth Freed, “Salvadoran Rightist Wraps Up Campaign,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 24 March 1982; Dial Torgerson, “6 Parties Competing in El Salvador,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 25 March 1982; and “‘Wrong’ Winner?,” *The Washington Post*, 1 April 1982.

(2009a: 12) calls “attitudes toward order and authority.” Over time, ARENA began to moderate. As Wood (2000a, 2000b) has detailed, this evolution reflected changes in the balance of power among economic elites, with landowners traditionally dependent on labor-repressive agriculture losing ground to more commercial, outward-oriented elites. This shift was symbolized by D’Aubuisson’s replacement as ARENA president by the mild-mannered businessman Alfredo Cristiani in 1985 (see below). Another contributor to ARENA’s ideological evolution was the increasing prevalence of neoliberal ideas at the international level, which were disseminated within El Salvador by a well-funded think tank called the Salvadoran Foundation for Social and Economic Development (FUSADES).<sup>9</sup> As a result, ARENA evolved from a party that “combined strident anticommunism with an exclusionary vision of *la nación* and pronounced hostility toward the United States,” to one that “increasingly focused on neoliberal philosophies” and “embraced democratic procedures and a cautious acceptance of negotiations with leftist insurgents” (Wood 2000a: 244-245). Today, ARENA officially defines itself as a “liberal party.”<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, ARENA’s opposition to economic redistribution, and its advocacy of “*mano dura*” anti-crime policies (see below),<sup>11</sup> meant that it remained a right-wing party, albeit no longer a party of the extreme right. Consistent with this ideological orientation, ARENA, like the other parties examined in this study, such as Chile’s UDI and Guatemala’s PAN, became a member of the Union of Latin American Parties (UPLA), the regional club for right-of-center parties.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> On FUSADES, see Wood (2000a: 245; 2000b: 72-73) and Johnson (1993: 1998).

<sup>10</sup> See the 2011 ARENA publication, *Alianza Republicana Nacionalista: Un Partido Liberal*, by Orlando Cocar. See also ARENA (2011: 5-6).

<sup>11</sup> ARENA’s emphasis of “*mano dura*” will be discussed more in the section on ARENA’s brand. For more on this part of ARENA’s platform, see Hume (2007), Uang (2009) and Holland (2013).

<sup>12</sup> See “El Salvador” on the UPLA website: <http://upla.net/paises/salvador.html>. Accessed on 30 June 2014.

In addition to being ideologically right-wing, ARENA was a conservative party according to Gibson's (1996) sociological definition. All observers agree on this point, with ARENA routinely described with labels such as "the party of the oligarchy" (Norton 1991: 199); "the first serious and openly partisan political vehicle for the oligarchy since the early 1930s" (Dunkerley 1988: 351); "a successful political party that directly represented the interests of the social elite" and "an effective party of the entrepreneurial classes" (Stanley 1996: 220, 254); "the most important electoral representative of the country's socioeconomic elite" (Gibson 1996: 227); "capital's consensus political instrument" (Miles and Ostertag 1989: 16); and "the prime vehicle for elite participation in politics" (Wolf 2009: 439).<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the perceived significance of ARENA was precisely its deep roots in the Salvadoran upper class, since, as Stanley (1996: 234) puts it, "[t]his was the first time the Salvadoran capitalist classes had united around a single party." As discussed below, ARENA, like any successful party, has always won votes from a broad swath of Salvadoran society. As Alvaro Artiga (2001: 141), one of El Salvador's leading political scientists, explains: "ARENA was born with a very clear class identity, although its activist base was multi-class. Like its predecessor, the National Conciliation Party (PCN), it has activists from all social strata, from peasants to businessmen. But the predominance of businessmen in the party leadership is what gives the party its classist orientation."<sup>14</sup> In the words of one prominent party leader, ARENA was formed by "people who had something to lose. We weren't paupers. All of us who participated had something to lose. We weren't broke, penniless [or]

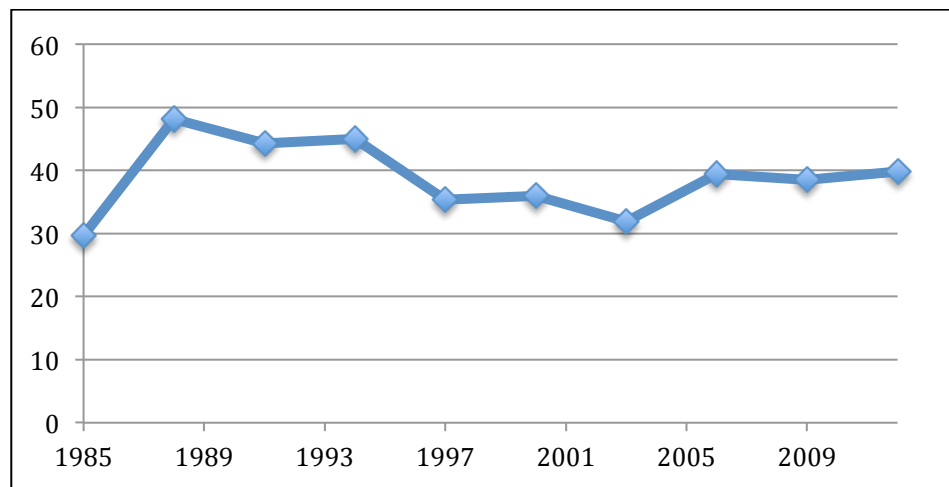
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<sup>13</sup> See also Wood (2000a) and Schneider (2012: 17, 109).

<sup>14</sup> See Koivumäki (2014: 275).

paupers, no.”<sup>15</sup> Over time, the overlap between El Salvador’s wealthiest individuals and the leadership of ARENA would become increasingly blatant, leading even from some ARENA members to express concern. By 2003, the party’s top organ, the National Executive Committee (COENA), had become so dominated by economic elites that it became known among ARENA members as the “oligarchic COENA.”<sup>16</sup>

Figure 7.1. ARENA in Legislative Elections (%)<sup>17</sup>



In its right-of-center ideology and its upper-class core constituency, ARENA was similar to Guatemala’s PAN (see Chapter 8). However, ARENA and the PAN differed in two important respects. The first difference was ARENA’s extremely strong—and, crucially, sustained—electoral performance (see Figure 7.1). In its debut election, the March 1982 constituent assembly election, ARENA came in second place with 29.3 percent of the vote.

<sup>15</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 26 September 2012.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of this “oligarchic COENA,” see Galeas and Galeas (2009: 19-20).

<sup>17</sup> Source: Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas.

Remarkably, this excellent performance was its *worst ever*; it would top this percentage in every subsequent legislative election. In 1985, it again came in second place with 29.7 percent, and in 1988, it came in first place with a whopping 48.1 percent. As discussed above, El Salvador was not fully democratic in the 1980s. However, ARENA continued to perform strongly after the country's transition to full democracy, coming in first place in the "founding election" of 1994 with 44.3 percent, and oscillating between 31.9 and 39.8 percent in 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012. Whether one chooses to begin counting in 1982 or 1994, ARENA easily meets this study's criteria for successful party-building, i.e., winning at least 10 percent of the vote in five or more consecutive elections. As noted above, the party also performed extremely well in presidential elections, winning the presidency in 1989, 1994, 1999 and 2004.<sup>18</sup> As these numbers suggest, ARENA's electorate, as with all successful conservative parties, went well beyond its upper-class core constituency. The party did particularly well with rural voters and those with lower levels of education (Koivumaekei 2014: 274-275).<sup>19</sup> As will be seen in Chapter 8, Guatemala's PAN also managed to cobble together an electoral coalition that transcended its upper-class core constituency. This coalition was fickle, however, and the PAN followed the arc of all "flash parties": it rose quickly, and it fell quickly. As I argue in Chapter 8, the fall of the PAN was largely the product of two devastating schisms in the early 2000s, in which popular leaders abandoned the party and took with them much of the PAN's electorate. ARENA's electoral coalition, in contrast, was far more stable. ARENA suffered no significant schisms during

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<sup>18</sup> ARENA elected four consecutive presidents: Alfredo Cristiani (1989-1994), Armando Calderón Sol (1994-1999), Francisco Flores (1999-2004) and Antonio Saca (2004-2009).

<sup>19</sup> This claim is based on self-reported voting patterns by respondents in Americas Barometer surveys conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) (Koivumaekei 2014: 274-275).

the 1980s and 1990s, and when it finally did experience a serious schism in 2009, with the departure of several legislators and the formation of a new breakaway party called the Grand Alliance for National Unity (GANU),<sup>20</sup> this had no discernible effect on its electoral performance. In fact, ARENA's electoral performance *improved* after the schism: in the 2009 legislative election, the last to take place before the schism, ARENA won 38.5 percent; in the 2012 legislative election, the first to take place after the schism, ARENA's vote share rose slightly to 39.8 percent. The upshot is that ARENA managed not only to construct an electoral coalition that transcended its core constituency, but also one that was stable.

The second major difference was that ARENA was an authoritarian successor party, while Guatemala's PAN was not. As discussed in Chapter 6, ARENA was founded by Roberto D'Aubuisson, who, as the deputy director of ANSESAL, had occupied a high-level position in the pre-1979 military regime. As such, the party meets the criteria to be considered an authoritarian successor party. ARENA also stands out for its founders' involvement in "death squad" violence, which, remarkably, continued for some time after its leaders were elected to positions of high office.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, ARENA is something of a

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<sup>20</sup> See Elaine Freedman, "El Salvador: GANA's Birth is ARENA's Loss." *Revista Envío*, No. 341, December 2009. <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/4115>. Accessed on 1 July 2014. Also author's interview with GANA founder, 25 October 2012.

<sup>21</sup> D'Aubuisson's turn to party-building did *not* mean a turn away from violence. On the contrary, while ARENA vigorously contested elections, it continued to be involved in "death squad" activities. Following ARENA's strong performance in the March 1982 election, D'Aubuisson became the president of the constituent assembly, and was arguably "the most important politician in the country" (Anderson 1988: 114). In addition, in the new national unity government led by President Alvaro Magaña, "ARENA members were ministers of economics, commerce, and public health" (Anderson 1988: 114). Nevertheless, D'Aubuisson and his associates continued to engage in "death squad" killings on the side. As president of the constituent assembly, D'Aubuisson directed a team that engaged in what the CIA described as "political intimidation, including abduction, torture, and murder" (quoted in Arnson 2000: 96). Many of these killings were organized by none other than Héctor Antonio Regalado, the man who, as discussed in Chapter 6, had earlier transformed a Boy Scout troop into a "death squad" group, then had several of the boys killed out of fear that they possessed too much incriminating information. D'Aubuisson appointed Regalado security chief of the constituent assembly; from this position, Regalado led a team of civilians and active-duty members of the security apparatus that, between 1982 and 1983, "was credited with the assassination of Christian Democratic



borderline instance of an authoritarian successor party. Though he had occupied a high-level position in the security apparatus, D'Aubuisson was probably not as central a player in the old regime as, for example, Hugo Banzer in Bolivia or Jaime Guzmán in Chile. Moreover, ARENA does not seem to have become as much of a magnet for former authoritarian incumbents as, for example, Chile's UDI or Brazil's PFL.<sup>22</sup> The most clear-cut example of an authoritarian successor party in El Salvador was actually the PCN, not ARENA. The fact that the PCN survived the transition to democracy, winning an average of 9.8 percent in legislative elections between 1982 and 2012,<sup>23</sup> suggests that it was a beneficiary of authoritarian inheritance.<sup>24</sup> However, the PCN's performance paled in comparison to that of ARENA and, as discussed below, ARENA probably benefited even more from authoritarian inheritance than the PCN, particularly through its inheritance of the old ORDEN structure. The unequal performances of these two parties suggest that authoritarian inheritance does not accrue automatically and in equal proportion to all authoritarian successor parties, even those that operate simultaneously in the same country. Instead, agency plays an important role, with some authoritarian successor party leaders

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mayors and party workers...the machine-gunning of PDC [Christian Democratic Party] headquarters, the torture and murder of guerrillas...and the bombing of a printshop, the car of a labor leader, and the homes of Jesuit priests and a professor at the prominent Central American University (UCA)" (Arnson 2000: 96). In short, in its early years, ARENA was not just a political party; it was an "anticommunist, antireformist terrorist organization" (Stanley 1996: 219). See also Douglas Farah, "Salvadoran Death Squads Threaten Resurgence," *The Washington Post*, 28 August 1988, and Douglas Farah, "Death Squad Began as Scout Troop," *The Washington Post*, 29 August 1988.

<sup>22</sup> On the UDI, see Chapters 3 and 4 of this study. On the PFL, see Power (2000: 80-81).

<sup>23</sup> Author's calculations based on data from Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas: <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/elecdata/elecdata.html>. Accessed on 30 June 2014.

<sup>24</sup> The PCN did particularly well in the March 1982 constituent assembly election, winning 18.6 percent of the popular vote. This appears to have been at least partially the product of authoritarian inheritance. According to Baloyra (1982: 177), "it is likely that the PCN lost its most reactionary element to ARENA." However, what "was left of the PCN was probably its traditional rural constituency and a political machine dating back to its 'official' days which includes some labor, middle-class, and bureaucratic elements" (Baloyra 1982: 177). See also Eguizábal (1992: 141).

proving more adept at taking advantage of the resources left over from the old regime than others. In the concluding chapter, I return to this issue of agency in more detail.

To summarize, ARENA differed from the PAN in two important respects: it was far more successful at constructing a stable electoral coalition, and it was an authoritarian successor party. I argue that these two characteristics were linked. Specifically, I argue that ARENA, an authoritarian successor party, benefited from various forms of authoritarian inheritance, which gave it the tools to win votes from a broad swath of the Salvadoran electorate, and to avoid schisms during the party's start-up years. In the third section of this chapter, I lay out this argument in detail, highlighting four crucial resources that ARENA inherited from the military regime. Before discussing these forms of authoritarian inheritance, however, it is necessary to examine why El Salvador's most important new conservative party took the form of an authoritarian successor party, something that did not occur in neighboring Guatemala. In the next section, I argue that this outcome can be explained by looking at a critical antecedent related to the end of El Salvador's old regime.

### Antecedent Conditions

In order to understand why El Salvador's most important new conservative party took the form of an authoritarian successor party, it is necessary to look at one of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: the level of threat. As discussed in Chapter 2, the existence of a high level of threat before or after the authoritarian regime raises the likelihood that a conservative authoritarian successor party will form by increasing the level of negative legitimacy of the authoritarian regime and/or by encouraging collective action on

the part of powerful actors in favor of authoritarian incumbents. In El Salvador, the relevant threat came *after* the fall of the old regime.<sup>25</sup> In this study, I operationalize level of threat by asking a simple question: did the radical left actually take power in the country in question? In El Salvador, the answer is “yes.” Specifically, it came in the form of the Revolutionary Governing Junta that took power after the October 1979 coup. In this section, I argue that this short-lived junta (and subsequent juntas) had a decisive impact on the eventual formation of ARENA. The junta’s appointment of leftist politicians to positions of power and its initiation of far-reaching reforms terrified elites and drove them to seek assistance from displaced hardliners from the old regime, notably Roberto D’Aubuisson. The fact that the junta was supported by the United States made the threat it posed especially serious. While the country’s powerful guerrilla insurgency was also an important factor, this cannot explain variation between El Salvador and Guatemala, since Guatemala also faced a powerful guerrilla insurgency (see Chapter 8).<sup>26</sup> Where the two countries truly diverged was in the new governments that took power after their old authoritarian regimes were overthrown in palace coups. In Guatemala, the old regime was overthrown in a palace coup in March 1982, which resulted in the dictatorship (1982-1983) of Efraín Ríos Montt; in power, Ríos Montt launched a genocidal “scorched earth” military

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<sup>25</sup> Both countries’ military regimes were inaugurated after a period of reformist government that traumatized national elites. In El Salvador, the episode was the short-lived presidency of Arturo Araujo in 1931, which was followed by a communist-led peasant uprising in early 1932 (see Chapter 6). In Guatemala, it was the period known as the “Ten Years of Spring” in 1944-1954 (see Chapter 8). Because both countries experienced comparable threats prior to the onset of authoritarian rule, however, this cannot explain differences in later conservative party formation, i.e., whether new conservative parties took the form of authoritarian successor parties or not.

<sup>26</sup> By 1981, some military officers in Guatemala were predicting that the country’s guerrillas would take power within two to three years (Schirmer 1998: 38). In addition, the guerrilla insurgency in Guatemala mixed class and ethnic conflict, which, according to Slater (2010), is a particularly menacing combination. The participation of large numbers of indigenous people in the Guatemalan insurgency created a terrifying scenario for Guatemalan elites: “[T]he horrifying prospect of such a coalition—Indians and communists united!—posed such a lethal threat to the civil-military regime that it demanded immediate action” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 38).

campaign against the country's guerrillas, which resulted in their virtual annihilation (see Chapter 8). In El Salvador, the 1979 coup brought to power the Revolutionary Governing Junta, which sought to carry out many of the very reforms demanded by the armed left, and which, moreover, many elites believed was secretly conniving with the armed left.

Looking back on the events of 1979-1980 with the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to downplay the significance of the Revolutionary Governing Junta. We know that many of the junta's most ambitious reforms were scuttled by military hardliners, and we know that a wave of extraordinary violence was unleashed against the very groups that were meant to be the beneficiaries of these reforms (see Chapter 6). Salvadoran elites did not experience these events with the benefit of hindsight, however; they experienced them in real time, in which the possibility of losing everything seemed very real. Elites' fearful response to the junta was colored by a "paranoid anti-communism" (Paige 1997: 126), the origins of which could be traced to the events of 1931-1932 when, in rapid succession, a left-leaning reformer was elected president and the Communist Party led an armed peasant uprising (see Chapter 6). These events traumatized Salvadoran elites and resulted in a widely held worldview that interpreted any advocacy of reform on behalf of El Salvador's poor majority as communistic or, at the very least, as a harbinger of communism, just as Araujo's social democratic policies in 1931 had supposedly opened the door to the communist uprising of 1932.<sup>27</sup>

But the fearful reaction of Salvadoran elites was not the product of paranoia alone. The Revolutionary Governing Junta really *was* quite radical. As discussed in Chapter 6, this radicalism was indicated by the "Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador" the day of the October 1979 coup, which decried "the ancestral privileges of the dominant classes"

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<sup>27</sup> See Stanley (1996: 57).

and promised to carry out a “profound transformation of the economic, social, and political structures of the country.”<sup>28</sup> It was also evident in the composition of the junta and, in particular, its ministerial appointments, in which the UDN (a front party for the Communist Party) and the social democratic MNR were heavily represented.<sup>29</sup> In a country where military rule had been justified for a half-century on the basis of anti-communism, having actual members of the Communist Party in government was a truly shocking development. Perhaps even more importantly, the junta began to implement far-reaching reforms. In December 1979, it froze all land transactions (and applied this measure retroactively to the day of the October 1979 coup) to prevent large landowners from splitting up their estates, which was “a preliminary step in the implementation of a major land reform, a fact not lost on the country’s private sector” (Stanley 1996: 157). The junta also nationalized the export sector, creating a state-owned monopsony that would have the exclusive right to buy coffee produced in El Salvador.<sup>30</sup> It is true that the Revolutionary Governing Junta was short-lived. In January 1980, just two and a half months after it was formed, the junta came to an end after all of its civilian members and ministerial appointees resigned *en masse*. However, a new junta was immediately formed, which included the participation of the Christian Democrats but excluded parties of the left.<sup>31</sup> Although the Christian Democrats were a centrist party, the new junta continued in the footsteps of the first junta. In fact, as discussed in Chapter 6, it launched “a set of reforms—including the nationalization of the banking system and an

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<sup>28</sup> See “Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador,” reproduced in Loveman and Davies (1997: 203-206).

<sup>29</sup> The UDN was given five cabinet posts and the MNR was given four. The Christian Democrats were also given five posts (Stanley 1996: 149). The UDN “dominated the Ministry of Labour” (Dunkerley 1982: 138).

<sup>30</sup> See Johnson (1993: 198-201) and Paige (1997: 194-198).

<sup>31</sup> See Anderson (1988: 91-92) and Stanley (1996: 183-184).

agrarian reform—that went further than anything the October junta had been able to achieve” (LeoGrande 2000: 42).<sup>32</sup>

The reaction of Salvadoran elites to this turn of events was one of shock.<sup>33</sup> This was a terrifying situation for them, and they arguably saw the post-1979 juntas as even more threatening than the country’s guerrillas. As one cabinet member appointed by the first junta later recalled: “The rich weren’t seriously afraid of the [armed] left or, at least, were equally if not more afraid of us. They thought we were as great a threat as the left.”<sup>34</sup> There were a few reasons for this view. First, while the guerrillas represented a *hypothetical* threat of great loss to the country’s elites, the juntas represented an *actual* threat. In other words, while the guerrillas promised to carry out large-scale reforms, the juntas were actually doing it. Second, many believed that the left-wing members of the first junta, despite claims to the contrary, were nothing more than “a polite front for the guerrilla left” (Stanley 1996: 161). While exaggerated, there was a kernel of truth to such claims: one of the main military organizers of the coup, Captain Francisco Mena Sandoval, later joined the FMLN, and one

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<sup>32</sup> This helped to reinforce the idea that the Christian Democrats and the left were essentially the same: “For vast sectors of the dominant classes, the differences between the PDC and the FDR-FMLN are only circumstantial or related to method: one side supports armed struggle while the other favors the electoral process. [But] both seek a social organization that leaves no space for individual initiative, which would be drowned out by state gigantism. The alliance that UNO expressed in the 1970s would seem to reveal the programmatic community uniting the Christian Democrats with the left” (Gaspar 1989: 17-18). In short, “[t]hese sectors perceived the Christian Democrats as a social threat, cloaked in democratic language, but socialist at the end of the day” (Gaspar 1989: 41).

<sup>33</sup> As one businessman, upon seeing the composition of the first junta, recalls: “We thought all was lost” (quoted in Stanley 1996: 134). A landowner and ARENA founder offered a similar reflection about the second junta: “During that government, the productive sectors were treated practically like enemies of the country and were marginalized from all of the mechanisms of the governmental apparatus” (Valdivieso 2008: 188).

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Stanley (1996: 161). The CIA offered a similar assessment, noting in one report that “[r]ightwing extremists have viewed government reformers as national security threats equal to those posed by the guerrilla movement” (quoted in Arnson 2000: 95). In the words of one landowner and ARENA founder: “Our biggest worry was that the socializing movement was being driven by the Christian Democratic government, the armed forces and the Jimmy Carter administration, in a wrongheaded attempt to stop communist subversion” (Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in Galeas 2011: 87). See also Johnson (1993: 176-177).

of the left-leaning civilian members of the junta, Guillermo Ungo, went on to lead the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), a close ally of the FMLN.<sup>35</sup> Third, and perhaps most significantly, the creation of the juntas meant that, after a half-century of close collaboration, elites found that “they had lost the use of the army to defend their interests” (Pyes 1983: 31). The existence of left-leaning officers, which ARENA founders describe as “communist soldiers” (Panamá 2005: 47) or “anti-national forces [*los anti-patria*] that had infiltrated the military,”<sup>36</sup> was arguably the most terrifying aspect of the Revolutionary Governing Junta. It is hard to knock on the barracks door to overthrow a leftist government if that government is supported by, and partially composed of, the military. Thus, “[i]n 1980, the oligarchy was shocked to see the military, their long-time ally, expropriating the largest haciendas and implementing reforms that nationalised the banks and the profitable coffee export business” (Norton 1991: 198). The result was that elites, having been abandoned by their erstwhile protectors, “felt dangerously exposed” (Pyes 1983: 6).

To be sure, the Revolutionary Governing Junta was not the only threat that Salvadoran elites faced. Most obviously, they also faced a powerful guerrilla insurgency, which would go on to fight the Salvadoran state to a stalemate in the early 1990s (Wood 2000b). The guerrillas not only managed to take control of vast swaths of the national territory, but also gained a capacity to disrupt the lives of elites, as when they launched a major offensive in November 1989 that “brought the war home to the wealthy neighborhoods of [the capital city of] San Salvador” (Wood 2000b: 82). Yet, as real as the

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<sup>35</sup> On Mena Sandoval joining the FMLN, see Anderson (1988: 101) and Stanley (1996: 139). On the FDR-FMLN alliance, see García (1989: 67) and LeoGrande (2000: 48).

<sup>36</sup> Ricardo Paredes Osorio, quoted in Valdivieso (2008: 16).

guerrilla threat eventually became, there are a few reasons that the causal importance of the Revolutionary Governing Junta should not be downplayed. First, as noted above, Guatemala also faced a powerful guerrilla insurgency, but did see the emergence of a “Guatemalan ARENA” (see Chapter 8). Second, while El Salvador’s guerrillas eventually became a formidable opponent during the 1980s, they had not yet achieved this status at the time of the October 1979 coup. Indeed, the country’s various guerrilla groups did not even fuse into a single confederation, the FMLN, until October 1980<sup>37</sup>—long after Salvadoran elites had begun to work with displaced hardliners of the old regime. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the perceived threat of the guerrillas was conditioned by the existence of the Revolutionary Governing Junta, as well as by U.S. foreign policy. In an insightful piece, Johnson (1998: 129) distinguishes between three different threats faced by Salvadoran elites after October 1979: the threat “from below,” in the form of the guerrillas; the threat “from above,” in the form of the Revolutionary Governing Junta (and subsequent juntas); and the threat “from without,” in the form of U.S. support for the juntas. These three threats combined to create an alarming situation. If elites had faced only a guerrilla threat, the problem could have been solved through a “scorched earth” policy against the guerrillas and suspected civilian collaborators, as in Guatemala (see Chapter 8). Indeed, this was known in El Salvador as the “Guatemalan solution,” and it was advocated by many rightists.<sup>38</sup> This option was mooted, however, by the existence of a government that sought to defeat the guerrillas by preempting their reforms, and which many elites believed was actually in

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<sup>37</sup> Arguably, the formation of the FMLN and its increase in strength was, in part, the *result* of the extraordinary uptick in “death squad” violence in 1979 and 1980, with many Salvadorans concluding that there was “no other way out” (Goodwin 2001). For an analysis of why many Salvadorans supported the FMLN, see Wood (2003).

<sup>38</sup> See Miles and Osterag (1989: 30) and Stanley (1996: 163).



cahoots with the guerrillas. The problem was made even worse by U.S. foreign policy, which imposed human rights restrictions and pushed for elections, thus preventing the kind of mass slaughter in broad daylight that would occur in Guatemala. All of this magnified elites' sense of threat, and made them feel that they were the victims of an "obscene conspiracy" (Paige 1997: 34) on the part of international communism.

Salvadoran elites responded with new forms of political action. After fifty years of political abdication to the military through the "protection racket" (Stanley 1996) scheme discussed in Chapter 6, they would now have to become actively involved in politics once again. One way they did this was through a media campaign and a series of mass demonstrations similar to those waged in Chile against Salvador Allende in 1970-1973, in which they warned against "the threat of communism posed by the junta" (Stanley 1996: 163).<sup>39</sup> Far more important for this study, though, was the alliance that they struck with displaced hardliners from the old regime, notably Roberto D'Aubuisson. Why seek help from an ex-soldier rather than hardliners still in the military? While it is true that the October 1979 coup did not result in the disappearance of military hardliners (indeed, as discussed in Chapter 6, they had a representative on the junta in the form of Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez), "[i]n the immediate aftermath of the coup...most believed that the [military] reformists had the upper hand" (Stanley 1996: 134). Moreover, purges of hardliners did occur, which meant that "[v]irtually all of the senior officers with whom the far right had been conspiring since May 1979 had been dismissed, leaving the civilian right

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<sup>39</sup> As Stanley (1996: 163) recounts: "During the second half of November [1979], the civilian right began a publicity campaign, talking about the threat of communism posed by the junta... On 10 December [1979] several thousand rightist women marched to protest against its failure to maintain 'law and order.' [...] The women's march was followed on 27 December [1979] by an even larger demonstration of roughly fifteen thousand rightists. It was a show of force by the oligarchy, a parade of personal armored vehicles, bodyguards and businessmen themselves carrying military-style weapons, while private airplanes and helicopters flew overhead." See also ARENA (2011: 19).

with few high-level contacts” (Stanley 1996: 162). The alternative, then, was to search for someone from the old regime known to be trustworthy and capable of coordinating the kind of no-holds-barred crusade against “communists” that elites demanded. D’Aubuisson was a strong candidate for such a job. While he did not become a household name until the 1979 coup, his intense anti-communism and high-level position in ANSESAL meant that he was already well-known to Salvadoran elites. In fact, in 1978, “representatives of several of the more conservative agrarian families” had approached the military president with “a proposal to organize and fund a secret network operating on a national level” in order to “carry out a full-scale dirty war” against the left, and “specifically requested that ANSESAL intelligence officer Major Roberto D’Aubuisson be named to command the operation” (Stanley 1996: 121). While the president reportedly ignored this proposal at this time, something very similar would emerge after the October 1979 coup (Stanley 1996: 121). In short, given his “20 years of military service tracking down enemies of the state” (Pyes 1983: 6), and extensive connections within the armed forces and ORDEN paramilitary network, D’Aubuisson was an attractive ally for elites that felt intensely threatened.

In the following years, a close relationship would emerge between D’Aubuisson and Salvadoran elites. According to Baloyra (1982: 109), “[t]he disloyal Right saw D’Aubuisson as a crusader for the restoration of...reactionary despotism in El Salvador.”<sup>40</sup> The CIA concurred, describing D’Aubuisson the “principal henchman for wealthy landowners.”<sup>41</sup> As described in Chapter 6, most “death squad” killings appear to have been carried out by the security forces themselves, as well as by formally dissolved (but still functional) ancillary

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<sup>40</sup> Baloyra (1982: 106) defined “the disloyal Right” as “the core elements of the deposed reactionary coalition who ha[d] been conspiring to derail the process begun in October 1979.”

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Arnson (2000: 94)

organizations, such as ORDEN and ANSESAL. Nevertheless, Salvadoran elites, many of whom lived outside of the country in Miami or Guatemala, played an important role in this “death squad” system, by providing financial backing to those who were directly carrying out the killings and attempting to overthrow the post-1979 juntas. As the CIA reported: “These wealthy expatriates have reportedly spent millions of dollars to support D’Aubuisson and his few followers in their effort to overthrow the present junta and return the country right-wing military rule.”<sup>42</sup> The United Nations Truth Commission set up after the 1992 peace accords came to a similar conclusion: “[S]ome of the richest landowners and businessmen inside and outside the country offered their estates, homes, vehicles, and bodyguards to help the death squads. They also provided the funds used to organize and maintain the squads, especially those directed by former Major D’Aubuisson.”<sup>43</sup> Although most deny having participated in acts of violence,<sup>44</sup> ARENA founders describe a similar convergence of forces. For example, one prominent ARENA founder, a landowner whose estate was expropriated under the 1980 land reform, recalls the following: “Groups of friends, among them those of us who had been affected by the reforms, as well as businessmen, professionals and some patriotic soldiers started to meet in order to organize ourselves for a peaceful struggle against the government’s mistakes and, above all, to turn back the populist wave that the reforms had

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<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Arnson (2000: 94). Investigative journalists also found that Salvadoran elites provided important support to “death squad” networks. See, for example, the articles collected in Pyes (1983), and Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’ ” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983. Scholars have come to a similar conclusion. See, for example, Montgomery (1995: 134), Norton (1991: 199), LeoGrande (2000: 50) and Wood (2000a: 240-241).

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in Wood (2000a: 241).

<sup>44</sup> Some are more forthright, however. As one businessman admitted: “When [President] Romero fell [through the October 1979 coup], I immediately started going against the junta. I started organizing to overthrow it. Given the illegitimate way the government had taken power, I didn’t see another coup as illegitimate’ ” (quoted in Stanley 1996: 163).

unleashed.”<sup>45</sup> Over time, D’Aubuisson and his elite allies would broaden the scope of their activities, forming a new party, ARENA. As described above, the significance of this new conservative party was that it allowed elites to defend their interests peacefully rather than having to depend on the military, and thus ultimately played an important role in stabilizing Salvadoran democracy.<sup>46</sup> Paradoxically, though, “[i]t took Roberto D’Aubuisson, a man who had been deep inside the military’s national security state, to form a party for the private sector elite” (Stanley 1996: 232).

To conclude, in this section I examined the impact of a critical antecedent—level of threat after the demise of the old regime—on the formation of a conservative authoritarian successor party in El Salvador. Specifically, I discussed the threat posed by the Revolutionary Governing Junta, and how it combined with the guerrilla threat and the threat posed by U.S. foreign policy, to create a truly alarming situation for Salvadoran elites. Experiencing an “unprecedented political and economic exclusion from national power” (Wood 2000a: 251), they responded with new forms of action. Most importantly, they made common cause with displaced hardliners from the old regime in order to launch two joint ventures: first, the coordination of “death squad” violence, and later, the founding of ARENA. Absent the threat “from above” (Johnson 1998: 129) of the Revolutionary Governing Junta, it is far less likely that a party like ARENA would have emerged in El Salvador. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, this was the situation in Guatemala: while the country had a powerful guerrilla insurgency, it did not experience a comparable threat “from above.” On the contrary, the dictatorship of Ríos Montt (1982-1983) unleashed a genocidal

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<sup>45</sup> Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in Galeas (2011: 86-87).

<sup>46</sup> On the transformation of elite representation in El Salvador—that is, from dependence on military rule to the use of a conservative party—see, Wood (2000a) and Stanley (1996: 218-255; 2006: 109).

“scorched earth” campaign that annihilated the country’s guerrillas. As a result, Guatemala did not witness the same kind of collective action on the part of elites and the union of forces between those elites and displayed former authoritarian insiders.

### Authoritarian Inheritance

In the previous section, I examined a critical antecedent that helps to explain why the most important new conservative party in El Salvador took the form of an authoritarian successor party. I argued that in response to the high level of threat posed by the Revolutionary Governing Junta that took power in October 1979—in combination with two complementary threats, the guerrilla insurgency and U.S. foreign policy—terrified elites reached out to a trustworthy hardliner from the old regime, Roberto D’Aubuisson, for assistance. While ARENA is more of a borderline case of an authoritarian successor party than parties such as Chile’s UDI or Bolivia’s ADN, it nevertheless benefited from authoritarian inheritance. In this section, I examine four forms of authoritarian inheritance from which ARENA benefited: (1) a territorial organization, (2) party brand, (3) source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle and (4) business connections. I demonstrate that these four inherited resources were crucial for allowing ARENA to construct a multiclass electoral coalition, and to avoid the devastating schisms that contributed to the downfall of other new conservative parties in the region, such as Guatemala’s PAN (see Chapter 8).

## *Territorial Organization*

The first resource that ARENA inherited from the old regime was a territorial organization. Building an organizational infrastructure is one of the core challenges that new conservative parties face, since they usually cannot draw on mass-based, preexisting organizations like labor unions and social movements.<sup>47</sup> ARENA, however, possessed a strong territorial organization from the outset. Many observers were puzzled by the new party's obvious organizational strength. As one reporter commented while covering the 1982 constituent assembly election, ARENA, despite having just been formed, "appears to have out-organized the other seven in the race, including the Christian Democrats... It has entered candidates for every available post, and Mr. d'Aubuisson, escorted by truckloads of heavily armed bodyguards, is the only contestant who has been regularly campaigning in areas his principal opponents, the Christian Democrats, say they are afraid to appear in."<sup>48</sup> What was particularly notable was the geographical composition of ARENA's support: "[D'Aubuisson] was always thought to have a following among large landowners, some businessmen in the capital and large segments of the armed forces. What has surprised those monitoring the election campaign is how well he seems to be doing in the countryside."<sup>49</sup> The strength of its territorial organization would continue to be one of ARENA's defining attributes. According to Artiga (2001: 140), "ARENA always had a presence in all of the national territory, becoming a true mass party... [F]rom the beginning,

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<sup>47</sup> The main exceptions are mass-based religious organizations, whether aligned with the Catholic Church (Kalyvas 1996) or established Protestant churches (Ziblatt, forthcoming), which played a key role in the formation of many of the most successful conservative and Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe.

<sup>48</sup> See Warren Hoge, "Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador," *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

<sup>49</sup> See Warren Hoge, "Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador," *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

ARENA had activists in the entire country, both in urban and rural areas.”<sup>50</sup> One illustration of this nationwide organization can be seen in the party’s strong performance in municipal elections. In 1988, for example, a mere six years after it was formed, ARENA won a whopping 70 percent of the country’s mayoralties, including the capital, San Salvador (Stanley 1996: 241). Similarly, between 1994 and 2006, “ARENA was the only party that...participated in municipal elections in each of the 262 Salvadoran municipalities” (Koivumaeki 2014: 280). In addition, “[t]he ARENA party developed an organizational structure capable of mobilizing massive attendance at political rallies throughout the country, and it appealed to voters across regions and classes” (Wood 2000a: 225).

The reason that ARENA had immediate access to such an impressive territorial organization was that it did not have to build it from scratch; it inherited it. Specifically, ARENA managed to inherit much of the infrastructure of the officially disbanded ORDEN. As discussed in Chapter 6, ORDEN was a mass organization created by the military regime in the 1960s to engage in a range of intelligence-gathering, paramilitary and “para-political” activities (McClintock’s 1985: 212). By the 1970s, it had tens of thousands of members and “had brigades in every hamlet and village” (McClintock 1985: 38). After the October 1979 coup, the new junta ordered the dissolution of the controversial organization. D’Aubuisson immediately saw an opportunity. ORDEN not only possessed a massive and grassroots organizational infrastructure, but also, crucially, one that was now uprooted and therefore up for grabs. Making use of his many contacts in ORDEN from his years working in ANSESAL, D’Aubuisson set out to retrofit the old organization for his own purposes. As one ARENA founder recalls: “Roberto D’Aubuisson’s obsession was to reorganize all those

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<sup>50</sup> Pyes (1983: 5) concurs: “The [ARENA] party organization spans all of El Salvador’s 14 departments (provinces).”

who had been members of the Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN), which he himself had helped to consolidate, which was prohibited and persecuted by the putschists, and which had had more than 100,000 affiliated members in the national territory.”<sup>51</sup> These former members of ORDEN were ripe for political mobilization, since they not only had a powerful grievance against the new authorities, which had just dissolved their organization, but were also being targeted for assassination by the armed left and were therefore in need of protection.<sup>52</sup> As ARENA (2011: 24) explains in an official history: “Against this backdrop, D’Aubuisson sought to reorganize those who had been members of ORDEN, who...were now guerrilla targets.”<sup>53</sup>

Building on the organizational infrastructure of ORDEN was appealing to ARENA for several reasons. First, ORDEN was massive. In a country with less than five million inhabitants, it had as many as 100,000 members—an extraordinarily large membership. Second, ORDEN’s presence was truly national. By all accounts, it had chapters in every corner of the country, including the tiniest villages. Third, ORDEN members were poor. This was important, given that all conservative parties must transcend their small core constituency of economic elites if they wish to succeed.<sup>54</sup> When asked why D’Aubuisson was so obsessed with reorganizing ORDEN, one ARENA founder pointed to precisely this factor: “Because that organization [ORDEN] had grown to have 100,000 members, who

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<sup>51</sup> Fernando Sagrera, quoted in Galeas and Galeas (2009: 109-110).

<sup>52</sup> This point will be examined in greater detail in the section discussing cohesion born of joint struggle.

<sup>53</sup> The investigative journalist Craig Pyes (1983: 8) reported the same: “At the beginning, D’Aubuisson said, ORDEN was the foundation of the mass movement he was about to build.”

<sup>54</sup> The founders of ARENA were aware of the need to construct a party with appeal among poor voters. As ARENA founder Fernando Sagrera explains: “The basic idea of the plan was to reconstruct the Salvadoran right, which found itself spread out and disoriented following the 1979 coup d’état, but with the certainty that that reconstruction had to be bottom-up—a popular right” (quoted in Galeas and Galeas 2009: 109).



knew and admired Roberto. That had to be the foundation of our movement—real people, poor people. And that is exactly the foundation of ARENA... How many rich people are there in this country? Count and you will see that there are no more than 100. Tell me, then, where do those 1,200,000 votes for ARENA come from?”<sup>55</sup> Fourth, ORDEN members had electoral experience. As discussed in Chapter 6, the old regime had become increasingly reliant on ORDEN to turn out the vote during non-democratic elections, with even PCN strategists admitting that ORDEN was more effective at this task than the official party apparatus.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, many ORDEN members were ideological rightists. It is true that many people joined ORDEN for opportunistic reasons, since membership conferred a number of tangible benefits, such as cheap credit; access to employment, education and health services; and protection against state repression.<sup>57</sup> Yet ORDEN also had an important ideological component. Ideological formation began even before joining, since the majority of ORDEN members were former military conscripts and thus had already been at least partially socialized into the values of the military regime. As Stanley (1996: 81) explains: “Most of the members of [ORDEN]...were recruited from among soldiers recently discharged from military service, since they had been drilled, observed, and politically indoctrinated, making it easier for officers to select ‘reliable’ candidates.”<sup>58</sup> According to

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<sup>55</sup> Fernando Sagrera, quoted in Galeas (2004: 12). This figure of 1.2 million votes appears to be a reference to the 2004 presidential election, when ARENA candidate Antonio Saca won approximately 1.3 million votes, or 57.7 percent, in the first round of the election, thereby obviating the need for a second round.

<sup>56</sup> See Chávez (2006: 87).

<sup>57</sup> On the material perquisites of ORDEN membership, see Armstrong and Shenk (1982: 77); Dunkerley (1982: 76; 1988: 367-368); McClintock (1985: 34, 56, 253); and Stanley (1996: 81).

<sup>58</sup> McClintock (1985: 219-220) explains how ORDEN recruitment worked: “The records of regular army conscripts are, on termination of service, reviewed by the army general staff vis-à-vis their suitability for

ORDEN founder General Medrano, one of the regime's main goals behind the creation of ORDEN was to continue this process by "indoctrinat[ing] the peasants regarding the advantages of the democratic system and the disadvantages of the communist system."<sup>59</sup> By doing so, they hoped "to make a barrier to the attempts of the Communists to provoke subversion among the rural populace."<sup>60</sup> To this end, they would try "to catechize the people...to indoctrinate the people, because he who has the population wins the war."<sup>61</sup> The result, in Medrano's words, was that ORDEN "was almost like a religion."<sup>62</sup> This ideological formation made ORDEN members ideal potential activists for the kind of party that ARENA founders hoped to build. In the words of one ARENA founder: "The people from ORDEN [had] received consistent political lessons about national and democratic values, maintaining a close relationship with the security forces, and for that reason served as [a base of] support for the military until its dissolution after the 15 October 1979 coup d'état. Now the trained people capable of distinguishing between totalitarianism and liberty and democracy—the people from ORDEN—would vote for ARENA" (Panamá 2005: 152).<sup>63</sup> The upshot is that ORDEN provided an ideal mobilizing structure upon which to construct

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incorporation into the police services (most National Guard and police personnel are recruited directly from army service) for recruitment into ORDEN on return to their home areas, or recruitment into special operations groups directed by the intelligence agencies. ANSESAL could tap these general staff records systems in order to keep the ORDEN network regularly replenished with reliable personnel, and under control." See also Dunkerley (1982: 75-76; 1988: 367-368).

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Nairn (1984: 23).

<sup>60</sup> General José Alberto Medrano, quoted in McClintock (1985: 34).

<sup>61</sup> General José Alberto Medrano, quoted in Nairn (1984: 23).

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Nairn (1984: 23).

<sup>63</sup> The PCN, in contrast, lacked an ideological rank-and-file: "The PCN was always a purely electoral party and based the election of its candidates on the convenience of the military hierarchy. It never had an ideology that defined it, much less that it transferred to its bases. It was of great utility to this party that General Alberto Medrano founded ORDEN in order to stop...the communist advance in Latin America" (Panamá 2005: 152).

a conservative party: its membership was massive, nationwide, poor, experienced and ideological.

In November 1979, the Revolutionary Governing Junta announced the dissolution of ORDEN. Much like ANSESAL, however, ORDEN's *de jure* dissolution did not mean its *de facto* disappearance. In fact, as soon as the junta made its announcement, "an ORDEN spokesman boasted that ORDEN would go underground to continue the fight against communism" (Stanley 1996: 167). This boasting was well founded, and "ORDEN's dissolution took place on paper only" (McClintock 1985: 253). To get around the problem of formal dissolution, ORDEN changed its name by simply replacing the word "Organization" with "Front": it thus went from being the Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN) to the Nationalist Democratic Front (FDN). However, it was an "open secret" (Dunkerley 1982: 143) that the FDN was nothing more than "ORDEN under a new name" (Anderson 1988: 94). One of ORDEN's most prominent defenders was Roberto D'Aubuisson, who, on his televised broadcasts, "assailed the junta for abolishing ORDEN" (Nairn 1984: 28). He vigorously defended the officially outlawed organization, which, in his words, had been "born in the bosom of the armed forces," and he assured viewers that while "ORDEN has ceased to function with that name...its principles live and are newly serving the fatherland with the [Nationalist Democratic Front]." <sup>64</sup>

D'Aubuisson did not just support ORDEN with rhetoric; instead, he directly intervened in order to prevent the organization from collapsing. He was in a strong position to undertake such a rescue operation, given his previous role as the deputy director of ANSESAL. Under the old regime, the two organizations had worked in lockstep, with

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Nairn (1984: 28).

ORDEN members passing the intelligence they gathered from their communities to officials in ANSESAL, who would then process the information and act on it accordingly. As McClintock (1985: 219) explains, ANSESAL was “responsible for vetting and monitoring ORDEN membership, a key counter-intelligence task, as well as co-ordinating information gathered through the ORDEN network, and deployment of ORDEN personnel on security tasks.” While ANSESAL and ORDEN were not housed in the same building, both had their main headquarters in the presidential complex (McClintock 1985: 220). During his years in the old regime, D’Aubuisson had worked closely with ORDEN, which included “organizing ORDEN chapters” (Nairn 1984: 28). Indeed, as one of Medrano’s protégés, D’Aubuisson “himself had helped to consolidate [ORDEN].”<sup>65</sup> As a result, he knew the organization well and understood how it functioned. In turn, ORDEN members, in the words of one ARENA founder, “knew and admired Roberto [D’Aubuisson].”<sup>66</sup>

D’Aubuisson played a direct and crucial role in preventing ORDEN from collapsing in the wake of the junta’s dissolution decree. According to investigative journalist Craig Pyes (1983: 8), he “recruited and paid about eight of ORDEN’s 14 departmental officials to maintain ORDEN’s structure down to the local level.” Anderson and Anderson (1986: 198) report the same: “An important cornerstone of D’Aubuisson’s support was found in the old ORDEN network. Although it had been officially dissolved several months earlier, D’Aubuisson had paid ORDEN’s provincial chiefs to maintain the organization, and it continued to operate in the countryside.” While the newly baptized Nationalist Democratic

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<sup>65</sup> Fernando Sagrera, quoted in Galeas and Galeas (2009: 109-110). Galeas and Galeas (2009: 110) go even further, claiming that after Medrano was forced to retire in the early 1970s, “D’Aubuisson inherited the leadership [of ORDEN] from Medrano.”

<sup>66</sup> Fernando Sagrera, quoted in Galeas (2004: 12).

Front (FDN) seems to have eventually fizzled, much of the old ORDEN network survived by being absorbed into D'Aubuisson's first political creation, the self-described "civic organization" known as the Broad National Front (FAN) (see Chapter 6). As one ARENA leader close to D'Aubuisson explains: "[T]he network that the putschists wanted to destroy—the network that was called ORDEN—[D'Aubuisson] rescued it through the Broad National Front."<sup>67</sup> ORDEN, as he explains, was a "national intelligence network... All those people, when ORDEN was dissolved, started to work with the FAN."<sup>68</sup>

Eventually, this organizational infrastructure would lay the basis for ARENA. In anticipation of the March 1982 constituent assembly elections, D'Aubuisson "reorganized the FAN into a bona fide political party, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA)" (Arnson 2000: 96).<sup>69</sup> In the process, as Pyes (1983: 8) reports, much of the old ORDEN infrastructure was incorporated into ARENA: "Much of that network now has been absorbed into ARENA. Retired Col. Mario Rosales y Rosales, one of ORDEN's original organizers, controlled the organization and 'all military for ARENA' [*sic*], said a high party official. The official, who asked not be named, said Rosales put an ORDEN man in each province to run the party." The result was that ARENA was born with a readymade territorial organization—one that was particularly strong in rural areas, where ARENA would subsequently have its best electoral performances. As one ARENA founder explains: "[The party's] territorial organization came, initially, from an institution that used to exist here called ORDEN, which had been formed by General Medrano... Upon that

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<sup>67</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 8 October 2012.

<sup>68</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 8 October 2012.

<sup>69</sup> See also Pyes (1983: 9).

organization, in part, ARENA set itself up in order to organize itself territorially in rural areas... [H]ere in the city, it wasn't necessary. Here people had a television, listened to the radio, heard about things, received the newspaper, heard about the news...but in the countryside, they didn't have that information."<sup>70</sup> Political scientists who have studied ARENA have similarly concluded that ARENA's strong territorial organization, especially in rural areas, was rooted in the old ORDEN structure. According to Blachman and Sharpe (1988/1989: 121), "ORDEN laid the foundations for ARENA's powerful organization in the countryside, where the party now regularly wins 40 percent of the rural vote." Similarly, Stanley (1996: 232) asserts: "ORDEN was the organizational core of the new party."<sup>71</sup>

In addition to inheriting the ORDEN infrastructure—by far the most important contribution to the party's territorial organization—ARENA also absorbed parts of the PCN, the "official" party of the old regime. As discussed in Chapter 6, D'Aubuisson consciously decided not to work through the PCN after the 1979 coup, believing that it was preferable to build a new party on the basis of ORDEN instead. Nevertheless, he was not totally averse to utilizing resources from the old PCN structure while constructing his new party. D'Aubuisson was in a good position to make use of such resources since, because of his previous position in ANSESAL, he had contacts in a number of institutions from the old regime, including the PCN. As one ARENA founder explains: "Roberto had a great knowledge of material matters and contact with many people in the interior of the country, leaders of the old PCN and other parties, as well as soldiers and civilians of all social strata"

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<sup>70</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 6 November 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Similarly, Eguizábal (1992: 141) writes that "ARENA had inherited a great part of the infrastructure of ORDEN." For her part, Arnson (2000: 96) writes: "ARENA drew on extensive support in rural areas provided in part by former members of ORDEN." See also García (1989: 75-76); Miles and Osterag (1989: 22-23); Norton (1991: 199); and Wood (2000a: 247-248; 2000b: 75).

(Panamá 2005: 75). Drawing on these contacts, D'Aubuisson appears to have poached some cadres from the PCN, who brought with them their networks of voters.<sup>72</sup> While the PCN was never particularly strong in organizational terms—especially in comparison to ORDEN—it did possess *some* level of organization, which D'Aubuisson believed could be useful to ARENA. Thus, according to one ARENA founder, D'Aubuisson set out “to recruit people who had experience in managing people on the part of the PCN, [and] some of them came with us.”<sup>73</sup> Apparently, “many people from the PCN started to meet with him, and afterward several people from the PCN came toward ARENA.”<sup>74</sup> Those who joined ARENA were not well-known, national PCN leaders; instead, they were “mid-level leaders, cadres from the departments and the municipalities.”<sup>75</sup> The number of former PCN leaders to join ARENA also appears to have been relatively small: “Not many [PCN members joined ARENA], but they were key people, in important places... They were leaders in their communities. And that was what was taken advantage of: local leaderships. We bet a lot on local leaderships.”<sup>76</sup> In short, while it was probably not a decisive factor, the absorption of mid-level PCN cadres into ARENA was a welcome addition to the party-building project.

To summarize, a major contributor to ARENA's success was its inheritance of a vast territorial organization built primarily on the platform of ORDEN, with some additional assistance from remnants of the PCN. By absorbing this organization, ARENA was able to access the sort of mass-based mobilizing structure that new conservative parties so often

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<sup>72</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>74</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>75</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>76</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

find elusive. The inheritance of this resource helps to explain the puzzle discussed in the first paragraph of this chapter—namely, how “ARENA did in five months what it takes most Salvadoran political parties at least five years to do.”<sup>77</sup> One reason it could do this was because it did not have to start from scratch; instead, it could build upon the organizational core of the previous military regime. As a result, ARENA was born with a massive, geographically extensive organization comprised of tens of thousands of poor, right-wing Salvadorans with experience mobilizing voters at election time. This was one of the key factors that helped ARENA to catapult to electoral prominence in its very first election. Another key factor was the party’s inheritance of a popular and widely known brand.

### *Party Brand*

The second form of authoritarian inheritance from which ARENA benefited was a party brand. From the moment that ARENA was formed, voters knew exactly what it stood for: virulent anticommunism and a no-holds-barred military solution to the civil war. The reason voters knew this is that ARENA had been founded by Roberto D’Aubuisson, and that was the content of the brand of “*D’Aubuissonismo*.” It is difficult to overstate the closeness of the connection between the party and the man in ARENA’s early years. As one reporter observed in the lead-up to the March 1982 election for constituent assembly: “The party [D’Aubuisson] founded, the Republican Nationalist Alliance (Arena) promoted itself in a slick, well-financed campaign as ‘the party of D’Aubuisson.’”<sup>78</sup> Indeed, “[w]atching the campaign leading up to last Sunday’s elections here, one would have thought that the people

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<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Pyes (1983: 38).

<sup>78</sup> See Frank del Olmo, “D’Aubuisson—Poison in Our Future?,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1982.



of El Salvador were voting in a referendum on D'Aubuisson.”<sup>79</sup> Another reporter provided a similar reflection: “Salvadorans are supposed to be voting for the party, not the man. The Christian Democrats and the National Conciliation Party have been around for years, and many will vote along party lines for one or the other. But in the case of Arena, organized only [recently], people will vote for the man—D'Aubuisson[.]”<sup>80</sup> ARENA members offered a similar account. In the words of one ARENA founder: “The architect of the design, the engineer of the work, the coordinator of logistics, the clear-eyed dreamer, was Major Roberto D'Aubuisson. The rest of us were workers, helpers—we were ‘present for the fatherland’ ” (Valdivieso 2008: 82). Scholars also concur with such accounts. In Wolf’s (1992: 11) words: “Roberto D'Aubuisson was far more than an inspiration and catalyst for the party. He provided at once the ideological glue, the brains and skill necessary for organizational deepening, and the charisma necessary for vote-getting.”

Since ARENA was “the party of D'Aubuisson,” voters’ knowledge of the party’s brand therefore hinged on the extent to which they knew what D'Aubuisson stood for. Here there is no doubt about the high profile that D'Aubuisson had achieved in El Salvador. As discussed in Chapter 6, D'Aubuisson had grown into one of the most famous—or, depending on one’s perspective, infamous—figures in the country following his series of televised denunciations of “communists” beginning in 1980. In these and subsequent public communications, D'Aubuisson presented a clear and consistent diagnosis of El Salvador’s problems, and offered a simple solution. As will be described in greater detail below, D'Aubuisson believed that El Salvador was the victim of a vast conspiracy by international

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<sup>79</sup> See Frank del Olmo, “D'Aubuisson—Poison in Our Future?,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1982.

<sup>80</sup> See Dial Torgerson, “Salvadoran Election Could Backfire on Duarte, U.S.,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 13 March 1982.

communism to bring it into the Soviet orbit. This conspiracy was being conducted from Moscow, Havana, Managua and even Washington, D.C., and had infected nearly every part of Salvadoran society, including parts of the military and nominally non-communist political parties. After leaving the military in the wake of the October 1979 coup, D'Aubuisson would continue the fight against this foreign enemy, just as he had for nearly twenty years as part of the security apparatus. Now, however, he would fight them with a new tactic that he referred to as “psychological warfare”: “I started psychological warfare against the communists. I denounced their program, their treasons, their infiltrations into the government.”<sup>81</sup> As he put it in another interview: “I started to publicly attack everything that smelled of communism.”<sup>82</sup> In this way, knowledge of the D'Aubuisson brand—and, by extension, the ARENA brand—became widely known among the Salvadoran electorate.

D'Aubuisson's “anticommunism” was broadly conceived, to say the least. The leftist guerrillas of the FMLN were, in his view, obviously Soviet stooges.<sup>83</sup> However, they were only the most transparent expression of international communism's insidious designs. This infiltration extended to the officers who had led the October 1979 coup, and thus it was no surprise that subsequent reforms followed “the same line as Cuba, which had also already been applied in Nicaragua” (ARENA 2011: 22). It was the Christian Democrats, however, who were the targets of D'Aubuisson's most blistering attacks. In his view, the Christian Democrats were not even crypto-communists; they were communists, plain and simple. As

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<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Anderson and Anderson (1986: 194).

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Pyes (1983: 2).

<sup>83</sup> As ARENA (2011: 83) explains in an official history of the party: “ARENA based its campaign [in the 1982 constituent assembly election] on its firm struggle against communism and the need to defend El Salvador from the FMLN guerrillas. The FMLN represented the internationalist vision advocated by the Soviet Communist Party, which was spread and supported by the communist government of Cuba and the new government of the Sandinista National Liberal Front in Nicaragua.”

he explained in a 1983 interview, “[t]he Christian Democrats are communists,” since communism was defined as anything that “directly or indirectly aids Soviet expansionism.”<sup>84</sup> Similarly, at a campaign rally during the 1984 presidential election, D’Aubuisson asserted: “[Christian Democrats are] Marxist-Leninist communists... I speak the truth about the communists...even though it annoys them. But the people should be well aware that what is concealed under lamb’s wool is nothing more than communists obedient to Russia, Cuba and Nicaragua.”<sup>85</sup> D’Aubuisson explained to the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa that the Christian Democrats were simply “the political arm of the subversives,” each of which “represents a different communist tactic: either by bullets or by ballots. The first one that comes to power will call the other, and together they will hand the country to the USSR.”<sup>86</sup> D’Aubuisson made this point at campaign rallies during the 1982 election through the folksy metaphor of a watermelon. The Christian Democrats—whose official party color was green—were just like watermelons, he explained, since they were “green on the outside and red on the inside” (ARENA 2011: 40-41).<sup>87</sup> To illustrate this point, he would then cut the watermelon in half with a machete (ARENA 2011: 40-41). Based on this interpretation, which D’Aubuisson seems to have genuinely believed,<sup>88</sup> he promised during the 1982

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Pyes (1983: 189).

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Craig Canine and Robert Rivard, “El Salvador: The Making of a President,” *Newsweek*, 5 March 1984.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Mario Vargas Llosa, “Democracia bajo el volcán,” *El País*, 25 March 1984.

<sup>87</sup> This interpretation of Christian Democracy was not limited to the Salvadoran Christian Democrats, but rather extended to Christian Democratic parties the world over. As D’Aubuisson explained: “The Christian Democratic Party in any part of the world... is the rightist sector of the Communist Party.” Quoted in Christopher Dickey, “Rightist Says U.S. Would Back Ouster Of Civilians From Salvadoran Regime; Rightist Urges Takeover By Military in El Salvador,” *The Washington Post*, 4 March 1981.

<sup>88</sup> See Warren Hoge, “Rightist Flag Bearer Roberto d’Aubuisson,” *The New York Times*, 1 April 1982, and Mario Vargas Llosa, “Democracia bajo el volcán,” *El País*, 25 March 1984.

campaign that if ARENA won, it would have José Napoleón Duarte and other Christian Democrats arrested and tried for “treason.”<sup>89</sup>

The second major component of the ARENA brand was the advocacy of a purely military solution to the Salvadoran conflict. In the view of ARENA leaders, the guerrillas could be easily defeated if only the government would allow the armed forces to take a no-holds-barred approach to the enemy. The notion that military engagement should be hemmed in by human rights considerations was incomprehensible to ARENA leaders. As one member of D’Aubuisson’s entourage told a reporter in 1982: “The guerrillas are almost in power and what does the [U.S.] State Department want? Human rights!”<sup>90</sup> If ARENA won power, D’Aubuisson promised during the 1982 election campaign, the guerrillas would be “exterminate[d]” within three months.<sup>91</sup> The tactics proposed to achieve this goal were extreme, with one ARENA campaign spokesman asserting: “Napalm is indispensable.”<sup>92</sup> They also admitted that there would be significant collateral damage, a point highlighted by the secretary of ARENA with a rather remarkable historical allusion: “We don’t believe the army needs controlling... Civilians will be killed, war has always been that way. When the Germans bombed London they didn’t tell the civilians to get out of the way first, did they?”<sup>93</sup> In short, ARENA promised that if it won power, the armed forces would be given

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<sup>89</sup> See Warren Hoge, “Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Christopher Dickey, “Salvadoran Rightist Mounts Vigorous Election Campaign,” *The Washington Post*, 7 February 1982.

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Warren Hoge, “Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in Warren Hoge, “Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Warren Hoge, “Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

a free hand in stamping out the insurgency.<sup>94</sup> Occasionally, ARENA's violent rhetoric spilled over from promises to threats. In the lead-up to the 1982 constituent assembly election, for example, one D'Aubuisson aide asserted that there were three possible outcomes: "We can win, we can go to the hills and fight, or we can leave the country."<sup>95</sup> Similarly, prior to the 1989 presidential election, former Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa, an ARENA deputy and the vice president of the national legislature, warned that the party would unleash a "nationalist guerrilla war" if robbed of an electoral victory through fraud.<sup>96</sup> This violent rhetoric was visually amplified by the fact that D'Aubuisson was almost always "flanked by bodyguards brandishing sawed-off shotguns, pistols and machine guns."<sup>97</sup> In the words of one ARENA founder describing the campaign for the 1982 election: "We were at war; we had to go around armed to the teeth" (Panamá 2005: 136). D'Aubuisson himself was sometimes armed at campaign events. In March 1982, for example, "[w]hen D'Aubuisson issued his post-election 'victory' statement, he wore a .45-caliber automatic on his hip."<sup>98</sup>

El Salvador's long history of authoritarian rule made much of the country's population receptive to ARENA's pitch, whose message of violent anti-communism was

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<sup>94</sup> As D'Aubuisson explained to a reporter during the 1984 presidential election: "This is a dirty war. [The guerrillas] are waging it with all types of arms, I am referring to secret acts, using citizens, setting off bombs, using the civilians who support them, and attacking with their civilian support. The soldier has to fight a clean fight. Human rights prohibits the army from winning against the subversives by using similar tactics." Quoted in "Q&A: Top Three Presidential Candidates," *The New York Times*, 25 March 1984.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Dial Torgerson, "Salvadoran Tries New Route to Power," *The Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 1982.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Lindsey Gruson, "As Salvador Vote Nears, Which Way for the Right?," *The New York Times*, 12 March 1989.

<sup>97</sup> See Steven Strasser and Larry Rohter, "Salvador Tries the Ballot," *Newsweek*, 22 February 1982. See also Frank del Olmo, "D'Aubuisson—Poison in Our Future?," *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1982.

<sup>98</sup> See Frank del Olmo, "D'Aubuisson—Poison in Our Future?," *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1982.

similar to the ideology that had underlain the pre-1979 military regime. To be sure, elites were the group most likely to favor this pitch, given that they had been the main beneficiaries of the old regime. Yet this was not just an upper-class phenomenon. On the contrary, a relatively large cross-section of society seems to have accepted the old regime. In a classic study, White (1973: 206) attributed popular support for the old regime to “political socialization.” He highlighted, in particular, “the general environment of information and ideas by which the uneducated and most of those with only a little education are surrounded,” and “the prohibition of any form of unionization or left-wing proselytization in the countryside” (White 1976: 206). All of this meant that “the existing socio-economic and political system appear[ed] to most Salvadoreans, except those with considerable education, as natural, inevitable, and more or less immutable” (White 1973: 206). This had consequences for the direction of the civil war in the 1980s. Although the FMLN guerrillas had considerable support in the countryside, many peasants nevertheless rejected the organization: “[T]he guerrillas in the countryside were often seen as intruders against fairly well established order... Many of El Salvador’s peasants, often highly conservative, hoped that the guerrilla conflict might end with the reestablishment of the old, familiar order” (García 1989: 75-6). Baloyra (1982: 177) expressed a similar view, arguing that this could explain much of ARENA’s success: “ARENA[s] strength should not be interpreted as a direct result of intimidation. One should not ignore fifty years of anti-Communist propaganda, the low educational level of the population, and the fact that the guerrillas have also killed people. ARENA may or may not be able to preserve this level of support, but its showing in 1982 suggests that there is a sizable segment of the population that identifies with the hard-line stance of Roberto D’Aubuisson and with the intransigence displayed by

ARENA ever since its inception.”<sup>99</sup> As discussed above, the non-elite Salvadorans that could most naturally be expected to support a party like ARENA were the thousands of ORDEN members, because of the ideological indoctrination that they had received in the military and later in ORDEN itself.<sup>100</sup> ORDEN, however, was just the most extreme manifestation of a more general phenomenon, whereby many poor Salvadorans became complicit in the perpetuation of the old regime and, indeed, came to identify with its values.

If El Salvador’s political history made much of the country’s population potentially receptive to a message of violent anticommunism, D’Aubuisson was also a particularly good messenger. Part of this had to do with his personal characteristics. By all accounts, D’Aubuisson had an unusual—but undeniable—charisma.<sup>101</sup> Although short, he was muscular and handsome, and he had a deft popular touch, making frequent use of curse words and colloquialisms in his speeches. As Paige (1997: 35-36) explains, D’Aubuisson’s

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<sup>99</sup> Others have made similar arguments. For example, Wood (2000a: 225) refers to “enduring remnants of the country’s authoritarian political culture.” Anderson (1988: 120) notes that “[f]rom the very start of the civil war, there were large numbers of people, even among the peasantry, who identified with the government side rather than the rebels.” Norton (1991: 199) asserts that ARENA “has a nationwide base of small-town rightists, some of them quite poor... These people identify with the authorities, and, in particular, with the military—which has been the real power in most rural areas for as long as anyone can remember.” Lehoucq (2012: 82, 85) explains that “ARENA also struck a responsive chord with thousands of Salvadorans who favored a hardline response to a growing rural insurgency,” and that “ARENA’s law-and-order approach to the war, its anti-communist rhetoric, and its free-market policies appealed to important segments of the electorate.”

<sup>100</sup> Not surprisingly, much of ARENA’s initial electoral support seems to have come from former soldiers. One journalist covering the March 1982 constituent assembly election, for example, interviewed several attendants of an ARENA rally and found the following: “All said they were supporting his [D’Aubuisson’s] party and all said they had once served in the military. Active members of the armed forces will not be voting March 28, but the large constituency of former soldiers is one that Mr. d’Aubuisson seems to have tapped.” See Warren Hoge, “Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982.

<sup>101</sup> For profiles of D’Aubuisson and his appeal, see Christopher Dickey, “Salvadoran Rightist Mounts Vigorous Election Campaign,” *The Washington Post*, 7 February 1982; Dial Torgerson, “Salvadoran Tries New Route to Power,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 24 February 1982; Frank del Olmo, “D’Aubuisson—Poison in Our Future?,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1982; Warren Hoge, “Rightist Flag Bearer Roberto d’Aubuisson,” *New York Times*, 1 April 1982; Dan Williams, “D’Aubuisson: Hero to Backers, a Pariah to U.S.,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 22 March 1984; Mario Vargas Llosa, “Democracia bajo el volcán,” *El País*, 25 March 1984; and Sara Miles and Bob Ostertag, “Absolute, Diabolical Terror,” *Mother Jones*, 24 April 1989.

personal image gelled perfectly with the party's message: "A large part of ARENA's appeal was a muscular, violent anti-Communist nationalism that D'Aubuisson, who struck a defiantly macho pose in campaigns, could embody better than anyone else. ARENA's early success owed much to its association with violent and antidemocratic solutions to complicated problems." Even his political arch-nemesis, the Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte (1986: 193), admitted that D'Aubuisson had a certain appeal: "Those supporting ARENA thought d'Aubuisson had the pop-star looks and nationalist appeal to be packaged as the people's choice. D'Aubuisson projected the image of a strong man, the strength of machismo, the strength of a military officer."<sup>102</sup> Women were reportedly particularly drawn to him, though many men also admired him. This could be seen, for example, in the reaction to a speech that D'Aubuisson gave to an elite audience during the 1984 presidential election: "The crowd was ecstatic. Women rushed up to him as if he were a pop singer; men called out '*Es un hombre!*'—he's a man."<sup>103</sup> At other times, D'Aubuisson's exultation of violence and man's-man charm combined in a truly chilling manner.<sup>104</sup>

How important was the brand of *D'Aubuissonismo* to ARENA's success, and was this really authoritarian inheritance? In response to the first question, the brand seems to have played a crucial role in ARENA's early success. As discussed in the beginning of this section,

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<sup>102</sup> D'Aubuisson's combination of physical attractiveness and extreme rhetoric led one foreign journalist in El Salvador to comment: "He looks like Eddie Fisher and sounds like Moammar Kadafi." Quoted in Frank del Olmo, "D'Aubuisson—Poison in Our Future?," *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1982.

<sup>103</sup> See Dan Williams, "D'Aubuisson: Hero to Backers, a Pariah to U.S.," *The Los Angeles Times*, 22 March 1984.

<sup>104</sup> This is captured well by an anecdote from the 1989 presidential election, while D'Aubuisson was campaigning for the ARENA candidate, Alfredo Cristiani: "Another vanload of peasants from a nearby town, summoned to make an audience, watched giggling as [D'Aubuisson] presented the journalist with two clay pistols, the barrels of which were larger-than-life-size, full-color, grotesquely detailed erect penises. The giggling turned to laughter. 'Major,' the journalist asked, 'have you killed many *subversivos* [subversives] with these?' 'No,' shot back D'Aubuisson, 'but yes, we have killed many *subversivas* [female subversives]. They like it. They go: "Ooh, oooh, ow." ' The major writhed in mock pain and pleasure. The campesinos howled." See Sara Miles and Bob Ostertag, "Absolute, Diabolical Terror," *Mother Jones*, 24 April 1989.



in its early years, ARENA had personalistic characteristics, in which ARENA the party and D'Aubuisson the man were intimately connected.<sup>105</sup> It was understood that a vote for ARENA was a vote for D'Aubuisson, and thus we can infer that ARENA's performance was, at least partially, a reflection of the popularity of his brand.<sup>106</sup> One clear indicator of this was D'Aubuisson's strong performance in the 1984 presidential election. In the first round, he won 29.8 percent, and in the second round, he won a whopping 46.4 percent. Although he lost the election to Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte, this was nevertheless an extremely strong performance, and clearly attests to D'Aubuisson's personal popularity. One prominent national ARENA leader offers a similar account, asserting that, initially, D'Aubuisson was the main "magnet for voters."<sup>107</sup>

The answer to whether the brand of *D'Aubuissonismo* really constituted authoritarian inheritance is more complicated. Unlike figures such as Jaime Guzmán in the case of Chile's UDI or Hugo Banzer in the case of Bolivia's ADN, who became widely known public figures through their positions in their countries' dictatorships, "D'Aubuisson's climb to public prominence came primarily after the 1979 coup" (Pyes 1983: 2). Moreover, ARENA never identified as openly with the old regime as these other authoritarian successor parties. Nevertheless, D'Aubuisson's role in the old regime was essential to the development of his

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<sup>105</sup> For example, when D'Aubuisson stepped down as ARENA president in 1985 in favor of Alfredo Cristiani, one newspaper article asserted: "Until now Arena has basically been a vehicle for D'Aubuisson." See "Salvador Rightist D'Aubuisson Quits Party Post," *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 October 1985. Cristiani offered a similar assessment, commenting in 1989: "The party is not a one-man movement anymore." Quoted in Julia Preston, "Salvadoran Rightist Party Remains an Enigma: Arena Presidential Candidate, Favored to Win, Tries to Present Moderate Face," *The Washington Post*, 16 March 1989.

<sup>106</sup> One newspaper article in 1989 described D'Aubuisson as "[t]he country's most popular politician." See Lindsey Gruson, "San Salvador Journal; He's a Rightist (No Doubt About It)," *The New York Times*, 11 August 1989.

<sup>107</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 8 October 2012.

brand—and thus ARENA’s brand—in three ways. First, without having been part of the old regime, it is unlikely that he would have had the opportunity to spread his message on television, which made him a household name and launched his political career. According to one prominent national ARENA leader, D’Aubuisson “always had contacts with people inside [the military],”<sup>108</sup> which were crucial for allowing him to avoid arrest and get his message on the air. As he explains: “[D’Aubuisson] had the good fortune that many soldiers had also been in the military with him. So, when Duarte or the Christian Democrats gave orders—‘He has to be captured... He wants to launch a coup d’état. You can’t let him leave’—the same soldiers...would let him know or would say to him, ‘Look, be careful.’”<sup>109</sup> When reports came that he was about to release a television broadcast, sympathetic parts of the military would drag their feet rather than prevent the broadcast: “[S]ince there was that connection [between D’Aubuisson and the military], the soldiers and police wouldn’t arrive, or they would take a long time and get there once [D’Aubuisson and his collaborators] had already left.”<sup>110</sup> By intentionally “arriv[ing] late,” the military provided D’Aubuisson with a kind of “implicit” help that was essential for the diffusion of his brand.<sup>111</sup> In addition, as discussed above, D’Aubuisson was already known to Salvadoran elites prior to the 1979 coup due to his position in ANSESAL. After he left the military, these elites provided him with funding, which was essential for allowing him to maintain his operations.

Second, while D’Aubuisson may not have been well-known to the general public prior to the 1979 coup, much of his subsequent appeal came from the notion that, as a

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<sup>108</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 26 September 2012.

<sup>109</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 26 September 2012.

<sup>110</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 26 September 2012.

<sup>111</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 26 September 2012.

former high-ranking ANSESAL official, he had access to privileged information about the extent of “communist” infiltration in Salvadoran society. As one U.S. diplomat recounts: “D’Aubuisson would come on TV with a stack of (ANSESAL) files at his side and from time to time he would pat them, as if to say he knew everything about everybody because all the information was right there in those files.”<sup>112</sup> D’Aubuisson’s status as a former member of the armed forces remained an important part of his appeal over time. To this day, it is common for ARENA members to refer to him affectionately as “The Major.” Finally, while ARENA did not identify publicly with the old regime as much as some other authoritarian successor parties, it did still make use of nostalgia for the pre-1979 period to attract support. In campaign rallies during the 1982 election, for example, D’Aubuisson would ask: “Is your life better now than it was two years ago?”<sup>113</sup> Two years before, of course, when life had apparently been better, El Salvador was still under the control of military hardliners like himself in the old regime. Similarly, ARENA has always launched its electoral candidates in the town of Izalco, which is where the Communist-led uprising began in 1932.<sup>114</sup> Since this was the event that led to the onset of direct military rule (see Chapter 6), launching ARENA candidacies from this location is laden with symbolism. ARENA leaders continued to express nostalgia for the good old days in more personal ways, too. ARENA founder Ricardo Valdivieso (2008: 299), for example, describes El Salvador in the 1970s as a land of opportunity: “El Salvador was a place where a person could make an excellent future for himself, especially he if was young and willing to work hard.” Another ARENA founder

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<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Laurie Becklund, “Death Squads: Deadly ‘Other War,’” *The Los Angeles Times*, 18 December 1983.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in Steven Strasser and Larry Rohter, “Salvador Tries the Ballot,” *Newsweek*, 22 February 1982. Many ARENA leaders speak with great nostalgia about the past.

<sup>114</sup> See Panamá (2005: 133-134). Also author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 9 October 2012.

and congressman described the past in similar terms: “[H]ere there was no dictator, here there was a party that had been in power for a long time, which was [presented] as a dictatorship, but which was the most booming country in Latin America. We had the second highest productivity per unit of land in all of Latin America in all products—sugarcane, coffee, cotton. We had a booming agriculture. There was more industry than in a ton of places. We were more advanced and had more technological advances than almost all of South America.”<sup>115</sup> Or, in the words of another ARENA founder and congresswoman, El Salvador used to be “the Japan of Central America.”<sup>116</sup> The upshot is that, while the mechanism of transmission from dictatorship to party brand was less direct for ARENA than for other authoritarian successor parties, D’Aubuisson’s role in the old regime and general nostalgia for that regime were crucial parts of the ARENA brand.

Over the course of the 1980s, ARENA began to modify its image in an effort to win broader electoral support. The most important moment came in 1985, when D’Aubuisson stepped down as party president in favor of Alfredo Cristiani. According to ARENA (2011: 49), “D’Aubuisson felt that ARENA had a ceiling, and that was him.” In particular, he concluded that the United States would never allow a D’Aubuisson presidential victory, and would continue to interfere in Salvadoran elections in order to avoid this outcome.<sup>117</sup> In order to get around the United States’ veto against him, D’Aubuisson handpicked Cristiani, a “cosmopolitan oligarch” (Norton 1991: 203) who had only recently joined ARENA, as his successor. As Norton (1991: 200) puts it, Cristiani “was everything D’Aubuisson was not”:

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<sup>115</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>116</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 4 October 2012.

<sup>117</sup> See ARENA (2011: 91-92).

untainted by “death squad” connections, a scion of one of El Salvador’s wealthiest families, soft-spoken, fluent in English and familiar with U.S. culture (he studied at Georgetown).<sup>118</sup> Under Cristiani, ARENA leaders toned down some of their more aggressive rhetoric, and instead began to speak about “change for the better.”<sup>119</sup> The party also began to attract new kinds of activists. This could be seen in the increasing numbers of stylishly dressed youngsters at ARENA rallies, leading some observers to speak of the rise of the so-called “Reebok Right” (Miles and Ostertag 1989).<sup>120</sup> This strategy seems to have worked:<sup>121</sup> with Cristiani as its candidate, ARENA won the presidency in 1989, and the party saw a sharp increase in its vote share in the 1988 legislative election over its performance in 1985.<sup>122</sup>

Yet, while changes to the party’s tone were significant, it is wrong to suggest that ARENA’s brand underwent a total transformation. First, while Cristiani without a doubt projected a very different image than D’Aubuisson had, his legitimacy nevertheless derived almost entirely from the fact that D’Aubuisson had chosen him as ARENA’s president. As one ARENA founder explained in an interview following the 1989 election: “I have a lot of respect for d’Aubuisson and because of that for Fredy [Alfredo Cristiani]—he’s been endorsed, christened, anointed by the boss, the real boss... But people didn’t vote for his kind of moderation. Basically, people voted for d’Aubuisson, not for Fredy’s kind of sissy

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<sup>118</sup> For descriptions of Cristiani and how he differed from D’Aubuisson, see Marlise Simons, “D’Aubuisson, Salvador Rightist, Quits Party Post,” *The New York Times*, 29 September 1985; and Julia Preston, “Salvadoran Rightist Party Remains an Enigma; Arena Presidential Candidate, Favored to Win, Tries to Present Moderate Face,” *The Washington Post*, 16 March 1989. See also Norton (1991: 200-201) and Paige (1997: 36-37).

<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Norton (1991: 201).

<sup>120</sup> See also Wood (2000a: 248).

<sup>121</sup> It is almost certain that another important factor was the decline of the Christian Democratic Party, which began to hemorrhage votes in the late 1980s and continued to shrivel during the 1990s. The importance of this factor will be described in the section on alternative explanations.

<sup>122</sup> In the 1985 legislative election, ARENA won 29.7 percent; in 1988, it won 48.1 percent.

policies.”<sup>123</sup> D’Aubuisson campaigned for Cristiani during the 1988 and 1989 elections,<sup>124</sup> with one journalist commenting that D’Aubuisson “still appears to represent the soul of the party.”<sup>125</sup> Another journalist reported that at one campaign event in 1989, “Cristiani stood quietly to one side of the stage, looking like a guest at his own party.”<sup>126</sup> At the beginning of the event, when the emcee asked the crowd “Who will be the next president of El Salvador?,” several voices cried out, “D’Aubuisson!,” even though it was a rally for Cristiani.<sup>127</sup>

Second, Cristiani’s ascent to the party presidency did not mean that D’Aubuisson ceased to be an important party leader, or that the party forsook him in any way. Instead, “the position of Honorary President was created, which fell to D’Aubuisson,” and through this lifetime position, D’Aubuisson “continued to exercise leadership” (ARENA 2011: 49). Cristiani himself explicitly rejected the idea of “the ‘old’ ARENA of Roberto D’Aubuisson and the death squads” and “the ‘new’ ARENA of Freddy Cristiani and a moderate Salvadoran bourgeoisie” (Miles and Ostertag 1989: 22). Instead, as Cristiani put it, there was just one ARENA: “[a] seven-year-old ARENA which, like anything else, has matured with time.”<sup>128</sup> Finally, D’Aubuisson continues to be the undisputed hero of the ARENA pantheon. To this day, the image of D’Aubuisson is ubiquitous in ARENA circles: “Images

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<sup>123</sup> Quoted in Lindsey Gruson, “San Salvador Journal: He’s a Rightist (No Doubt About It),” *The New York Times*, 11 August 1989.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example, Sara Miles and Bob Ostertag, “Absolute, Diabolical Terror,” *Mother Jones*, 24 April 1989, and Julia Preston, “Salvadoran Rightist Party Remains an Enigma: Arena Presidential Candidate, Favored to Win, Tries to Present Moderate Face,” *The Washington Post*, 16 March 1989.

<sup>125</sup> See “Rightist Party Demonstrates Broader Base,” *The New York Times*, 22 March 1988.

<sup>126</sup> See Julia Preston, “Salvadoran Rightist Party Remains an Enigma: Arena Presidential Candidate, Favored to Win, Tries to Present Moderate Face,” *The Washington Post*, 16 March 1989.

<sup>127</sup> See Julia Preston, “Salvadoran Rightist Party Remains an Enigma: Arena Presidential Candidate, Favored to Win, Tries to Present Moderate Face,” *The Washington Post*, 16 March 1989.

<sup>128</sup> Quoted in Miles and Osterag (1989: 22).

of D'Aubuisson are omnipresent in ARENA party offices, to be found in almost all the municipalities of the country. During electoral campaigning, references to D'Aubuisson and his 'invaluable services' to the fatherland permeate party propaganda" (Sprenkels 2011: 22). This could be seen, for example, during a mass rally in September 2012 to nominate ARENA's 2014 presidential candidate, Norman Quijano. A giant photo of D'Aubuisson hung over the stage where Quijano spoke, another hung over the main entrance, and a massive banner proclaimed "Thank you, Major D'Aubuisson."<sup>129</sup> ARENA's school for educating party activists is called the Major Roberto D'Aubuisson Institute of Political Training.<sup>130</sup> D'Aubuisson is still routinely referred to as "our maximal leader" in party literature, and every year ARENA takes out full-page commemorations in the newspapers on the date of his death (from cancer) in 1992 (20 February).<sup>131</sup> In 2006, the ARENA mayor of the wealthy San Salvador neighborhood of Antiguo Cuscatlán allowed a plaza to be built in D'Aubuisson's honor called the Major Roberto D'Aubuisson Plaza. The plaza was inaugurated by President Antonio Saca, who praised D'Aubuisson in his address for having saved El Salvador from "the tragedy of Marxist totalitarianism."<sup>132</sup>

One probable reason that ARENA continues to invoke the memory of D'Aubuisson is internal party politics: D'Aubuisson is the hero of the party, and thus is an effective way of rallying the rank-and-file. However, there is also some evidence to suggest that ARENA continues to invoke the memory of its founder because it believes that this may resonate

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<sup>129</sup> Author's fieldwork observations from ARENA's General Assembly, 30 September 2012.

<sup>130</sup> See ARENA (2011: 96-97).

<sup>131</sup> Author's fieldwork observations.

<sup>132</sup> Quoted in "Saca inaugura plaza pública en honor a D'Aubuisson," [http://archivo.elfaro.net/secciones/Noticias/20060626/noticias5\\_20060626.asp](http://archivo.elfaro.net/secciones/Noticias/20060626/noticias5_20060626.asp). Accessed on 12 December 2013.

with the broader electorate. In the two decades after the end of its civil war, El Salvador (like much of Latin America) saw violent crime skyrocket and, as such, the issue of insecurity became one of the major concerns of Salvadorans of all social classes.<sup>133</sup> As Uang (2009), Wade (2008: 26-28) and Holland (2013) have demonstrated, ARENA skillfully made use of this issue in order to maintain the support of its multiclass electoral coalition. Specifically, the party appealed to voters through promises of “*mano dura*,” including the introduction of discretionary crimes, the dilution of due process guarantees and the use of the military for police work (Holland 2013). This appeal appears to have been particularly effective during the 2004 presidential election, when ARENA candidate Antonio Saca promised to go beyond his predecessor’s *Plan Mano Dura* by implementing an even more draconian *Plan Súper Mano Dura*. According to Wade (2008: 27) and Holland (2013: 61-62), in making these “*mano dura*” appeals, ARENA invoked the image of D’Aubuisson in order to bolster its credibility on the issue. As Wade (2008: 27) explains: “Images of death squad leader and ARENA founder Roberto D’Aubuisson were repeatedly utilized by Saca throughout the campaign in an effort to rally the extreme-right voter base.” ARENA leaders seem to have calculated that doing so would not only excite the party’s base, but also bolster its “*mano dura*” credentials. As one ARENA candidate explained: “I think that the [party] heads thought about the possible controversy, but thought it would help the party unite and mobilize militants. Some people in the party are hugely energized by the revival of D’Aubuisson’s image... [F]or the new generation, he emphasizes the party’s strength, that ARENA always has privileged security over disorder and that makes us distinct from [the left].”<sup>134</sup> The

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<sup>133</sup> See Wood (2005: 197-199), Wade (2008: 26-28), Uang (2009) and Dammert (2013).

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in Holland (2013: 62).



implicit message seems to have been that because D'Aubuisson was willing to do anything necessary to stamp out communism in the past, ARENA—the party of D'Aubuisson—could be trusted to do anything necessary to stamp out crime in the present.<sup>135</sup> In short, even in the 2000s, decades after Alfredo Cristiani became ARENA's president, the image of D'Aubuisson remained an important part of the ARENA brand.

To summarize, another major reason that ARENA was able to catapult to electoral prominence so quickly after formation was because of its popular party brand. This brand was intimately connected to the figure of Roberto D'Aubuisson. While part of D'Aubuisson's appeal was due to his personal charisma, it also stemmed from his position in the old regime. This allowed him to present himself to both elites and the broader population as someone with insider's knowledge about the extent of the communist conspiracy in El Salvador. His military contacts, forged during his twenty years as a soldier, were also crucial for allowing him to access the airwaves in the 1980s, which launched his political career. More indirectly, fifty years of military rule—military rule based explicitly on anticommunism—had predisposed much of the country's population to the kind of violent anticommunist pitch that became D'Aubuisson's trademark. Over time, ARENA's tone moderated, particularly after Alfredo Cristiani became party president in 1985. However, the brand of *D'Aubuissonismo* remained central to ARENA's identity, and there is some evidence that the party continued to derive some electoral benefit from it into the 2000s.

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<sup>135</sup> ARENA has also attempted to link contemporary gangs known as "*maras*" to the FMLN guerrillas. As the party explains in an official history: "[T]he guerrillas of the FMLN demanded 'war taxes' and charged 'rent' to the buses that stopped on the highway, where people, at the point of a gun and with great fear, paid without being able to make any complaint. This was origin of the charging of 'rent,' which over the years became an important source of income for the '*maras*' or gangs, as well as a demonstration of their territorial control" (ARENA 2011: 42).

### *Source of Cohesion Rooted in Joint Struggle*

The third resource that ARENA inherited was a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. ARENA's high level of cohesion has been one of the keys to its long-term success, and helps to distinguish it from Guatemala's PAN. As will be discussed in Chapter 8, despite being born without a strong brand or territorial organization, the PAN managed to overcome these hurdles enough to perform well in a handful of elections in the 1990s. However, the PAN collapsed in the early 2000s after experiencing two devastating schisms, in which key leaders left the party and took with them much of its electoral base. ARENA avoided this fate. As Wood (2000a: 248) notes: "The party proved capable of managing internal tensions without significant schisms... ARENA remained broadly united and a potent political force."<sup>136</sup> To be sure, ARENA was not completely without internal disagreements, or even the departure of relatively high-profile leaders. After its loss to the Christian Democrats in the 1984 presidential election and the 1985 legislative election (ARENA came in second place in both elections), D'Aubuisson's 1984 presidential running mate, Hugo Barrera, left ARENA and formed a new party, Free Fatherland.<sup>137</sup> However, the new party performed badly, and Barrera later returned to ARENA.<sup>138</sup> Similarly, in 2001, ARENA founder Mercedes Gloria Salguero Gross left ARENA and formed a new party, the Republican People's Party.<sup>139</sup> It also performed badly, and she also returned to ARENA.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> See also Artiga (2001: 139) and Holland (2013: 55).

<sup>137</sup> On Free Fatherland, which later changed its name to Liberation, see Norton (1991: 200); Eguizábal (1992: 142); Wolf (1992: 11, 14); and Galeas and Galeas (2009: 19).

<sup>138</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 12 October 2012.

<sup>139</sup> See "Salguero Gross integra nuevo partido político," *El Diario de Hoy*, 21 December 2001.

<sup>140</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 6 November 2012.

As noted above, ARENA did eventually experience a more serious schism following its defeat in the 2009 presidential election, which caused several ARENA deputies to leave and form a new party, GANA.<sup>141</sup> What is striking is that it took 27 years for ARENA to experience a schism of this magnitude—and even more striking that, although GANA performed relatively well in the one legislative election that has taken place since its founding (it won 9.6 percent in 2012, its debut election), this had no discernible effect on ARENA’s performance. In fact, as noted previously, ARENA did slightly better in 2012, the first election after the schism, than in 2009, the last election before the schism.<sup>142</sup> The upshot is that ARENA has enjoyed a high level of cohesion. The party has largely avoided schisms and, even when these have occurred, it has not suffered any serious electoral fallout.<sup>143</sup>

In order to understand how ARENA managed to maintain this high level of cohesion, it is necessary to examine the party’s history and, most importantly, its interpretation of that history. As in the case of Chile’s UDI, ARENA’s interpretation of its own history is different from that of most outside observers. Most outside observers share former U.S. ambassador Robert White’s view that Roberto D’Aubuisson was a “pathological killer”<sup>144</sup> who helped to mete out violence on a massive scale, first, as a high-ranking official in a repressive military regime and, later, as a coordinator of “death squad” killings. Such

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<sup>141</sup> See Elaine Freedman, “El Salvador: GANA’s Birth is ARENA’s Loss,” *Revista Envío*, No. 341, December 2009. <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/4115>. Accessed on 1 July 2014. Also author’s interview with GANA founder, 25 October 2012.

<sup>142</sup> In the 2009 legislative election, ARENA won 38.5 percent; in 2012, it won 39.8 percent.

<sup>143</sup> In this respect, ARENA is similar to the party that has been its main competitor since 1994, the FMLN. Like ARENA, the FMLN has experienced some defections of party leaders. However, these defectors, much like the defectors from ARENA, have had very little success in taking the FMLN rank-and-file with them. For a discussion of the failure of these FMLN splinter parties, see Allison and Alvarez (2012).

<sup>144</sup> See Warren Hoge, “Salvadorans Vote Today in Election U.S. Calls Critical,” *The New York Times*, 28 March 1982.

observers see ARENA as the “aboveground alter ego” (Pyes 1983: 1) of El Salvador’s notorious “death squad” networks, and generally find little to celebrate in the party’s history. Unsurprisingly, ARENA members view their history differently. They view it as an epic struggle to save their country from the evil designs of international communism. In the process, they were the victims of terrible forms of persecution. However, they had no choice but to soldier on, given the horror of the threat they faced: a vast conspiracy originating in Moscow, Havana and Washington, D.C., which sought to subject El Salvador to the yoke of Marxist totalitarianism. In this telling, D’Aubuisson was a patriot and a democrat who fought heroically against the traitors and communists who had infiltrated every nook of Salvadoran life. To be sure, it is easy to take issue with various aspects of this account; however, for the purposes of explaining ARENA’s high level of cohesion, the veracity of the account is less important than the fact that party members widely and sincerely believe it. This has led to a compelling, shared narrative of struggle and sacrifice that has united the party ever since its founding. To understand the source of ARENA’s cohesion, it is therefore necessary, once again, to don the interpretivist’s hat.

The roots of this narrative of struggle can be traced to the Communist Party-led uprising of January 1932. This gave rise to a sort of black myth, which Thomas P. Anderson described in his classic study as “blood thirsty [*sic*] mobs butchering thousands of middle-class citizens, and of a heroic army that barely managed to turn back the barbarian wave.”<sup>145</sup> As described in Chapter 6, this event had a lasting impact, providing the justification for the next fifty years of military rule. As Paige (1997: 126) explains: “In an important sense, time stopped in 1932... Any vision of an alternative social order, of a fundamental redistribution

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<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Paige (1997: 344).

of wealth and power, remained inextricably bound up with the ghosts of the long-dead Communist rebels of 1932.” Specifically, it meant that “[a]nti-communism, the ideological consequence of that crisis and the justification of the system that emerged from it, became enshrined as the central element in the elite and the national ideology” (Paige 1997: 125-126). This worldview “made it possible to view even moderate advocates of change as dangerous and subhuman,” and it “reinforced the belief that the poor were a separate species, ignorant, ferocious, and credulous, easily ‘excited’ by ‘Communist’ agitators” (Paige 1997: 121-122). This worldview was widely held by incumbents of the authoritarian regime. The exemplar, as discussed above, was Roberto D’Aubuisson, whose anti-communism was zealous and indiscriminate. It also extended to the thousands of low-level regime collaborators in ORDEN, who were indoctrinated into the values of the regime during military service and later in ORDEN itself. It was also widely held by economic elites, who would later support D’Aubuisson in his “death squad” activities and in the founding of ARENA. The memories of 1932 were on display during the violence of the 1980s. For example, after the abduction and murder of the FDR party leadership in 1980 (see Chapter 6), a note was found on one of the corpses that read “Long live the massacre of 1932!,” with responsibility for the killings being claimed by a group calling itself the Maximiliano Hernández Martínez Anti-Communist Brigade, “named after the Salvadoran general who conducted the 1932 *Matanza*” (LeoGrande 2000: 59). The memories of the 1932 uprising and massacre would later play an important role in ARENA symbolism. As discussed above, to this day, ARENA launches all of its campaigns in the town of Izalco, where the 1932 uprising began, as a symbolic reference to the party’s strongly anti-communist ideology.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> See Panamá (2005: 133-134). Also author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 9 October 2012.

If this long history of anti-communism is the backdrop of ARENA's narrative of struggle, the modern history of the party starts with the October 1979 coup. ARENA recounts its version of history in a section called "brief historical outline of our party" in a 1988 document used to train party activists.<sup>147</sup> As the document explains, "ARENA is the result of the grandiose struggle of the Salvadoran people against Marxist-Leninist aggression." The spark for the formation of the party came on "15 October 1979, [when] a coup d'état brought to power elements committed to subversion." By this time, "[a]ll of the institutions in our country had been ably infiltrated by the communists. There was chaos, demagogy, deception, [and] disrespect for life and all values." One man, however, refused to accept this fate for his country: "The history of ARENA is connected to the political history of our maximal leader and founder, Major Roberto D'Aubuisson Arrieta. In November 1979, he asked to be discharged from the armed forces in order to denounce and undertake a political struggle against the Marxist-Leninist aggression of which El Salvador was the victim," and warned "almost prophetically [about] what was going to occur in El Salvador." However, there would be a cost for taking this principled stand: "In 1980, together with a group of nationalists, he suffered persecution, jail and exile, owing to his constant denunciations of the abuses of the Revolutionary Government Junta." Finally, in 1981, D'Aubuisson formed ARENA, which was "the expression of the struggle for liberty in our country."

In denouncing "aggression," ARENA meant something very specific: international aggression. In fact, many ARENA members insist that, contrary to popular belief, there was no civil war in El Salvador. In the words of one ARENA founder: "The aggression was not

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<sup>147</sup> See ARENA, "Cartilla de Formación Política," 1988.

one of Salvadorans vs. Salvadorans. That is the worst lie in the history of the world.”<sup>148</sup>

Instead, as explained by Ricardo Valdivieso, the man that ARENA describes as one its main ideologues,<sup>149</sup> and the director of the Major Roberto D’Aubuisson Institute of Political Training, there was “a war of aggression by the interests of Soviet imperialism against the republics of Central America, especially El Salvador” (Valdivieso 2008: 177). Although this conflict “resulted in many dead Salvadorans, [it was not] a civil war.”<sup>150</sup> One reflection of the widespread nature of this view within the party is that ARENA’s first event after being formed was called “The aggression of international communism in the Caribbean and Central America” (ARENA 2011: 36). This meant that the patriots who founded ARENA were part of a “defensive struggle against an extra-continental aggression” (Valdivieso 2008: 195). According to Armando Calderón Sol, ARENA founder and president of El Salvador (1994-1999), this was “the worst situation that any country in the Americas has lived through; our country saw itself attacked like no other in the Americas.”<sup>151</sup>

What made the situation even more frightening, in the view of ARENA members, was that the United States also appeared to be part of the communist conspiracy. According to Valdivieso (2008: 69-70), the ARENA ideologue mentioned above, “[p]owerful communist groups” had become “encrusted” in the U.S. State Department during the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and because of the country’s civil service protections, it was impossible to remove them. Thereafter, the State Department “served as

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<sup>148</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>149</sup> See ARENA (2011: 24).

<sup>150</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in Galeas (2011: 270).

a kind of legal refuge for these people” (Valdivieso 2008: 70).<sup>152</sup> During the presidency of Jimmy Carter, the situation became even worse.<sup>153</sup> According to the most generous ARENA interpretation, Carter’s support for the “socializing movement” was part of a “wrongheaded attempt to stop communist subversion.”<sup>154</sup> Some, however, sensed something even more sinister at work: the United States was part of the conspiracy against El Salvador.

D’Aubuisson was one exponent of this view, asserting that there had been “a pact between Russia and the United States, in which the Americans accepted pro-Marxist governments in Latin America in exchange for being allowed to continue their economic penetration in the communist world.”<sup>155</sup> It was supposedly because of this pact that the Revolutionary Governing Junta had been able to come to power in El Salvador after the 1979 coup, which allowed “traitors...to penetrate the government and leave in place measures that only favored international Marxism’s plans for domination.”<sup>156</sup> In short, “the Washington, D.C. of that epoch was the beachhead of the Marxist-Leninist, imperialist communism of the Soviet Union for the entire Western hemisphere” (Valdivieso 2008: 72).<sup>157</sup>

The upshot is that ARENA founders believed themselves to be part of a truly epic struggle. This struggle spanned decades and continents, pitting El Salvador against both of the world’s superpowers and their agents in El Salvador. ARENA founders, according to

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<sup>152</sup> See also the discussion by ARENA founder Guillermo Sol Bang in Galeas (2011: 104).

<sup>153</sup> Jimmy Carter was widely hated by Central American elites. One Guatemala dictator, General Romeo Lucas García (1978-1982), went so far as to describe him as “Jimmy Castro” (quoted in LeoGrande 2000: 57).

<sup>154</sup> Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in Galeas (2011: 87).

<sup>155</sup> Quoted in Galeas (2004: 29).

<sup>156</sup> Quoted in Galeas (2004: 29).

<sup>157</sup> See also Paige (1997: 34).



this view, were not “death squad” organizers, or even combatants in a civil war. Instead, they were “warriors of liberty,” to quote the title of a book by one ARENA founder (Panamá 2005). In the words of Armando Calderón Sol, “in the face of the disintegration of the fatherland and the imminent collapse of El Salvador into a totalitarian regime,” the founders of ARENA “initiated the most striking, brave and honest struggle that has ever been undertaken in El Salvador.”<sup>158</sup> In this “struggle against the threat of international communism” (ARENA 2011: 57), ARENA members believe that they were not just underdogs, but victims. In describing the 1984 presidential election, for example, the party asserts that the dynamic of the election was “everyone against ARENA” (ARENA 2011: 48), and insists that they were the victims of fraud.<sup>159</sup> These claims of victimization are very common among ARENA members. In the words of one ARENA founder: “We were an opposition party, born in terrible conditions of persecution.”<sup>160</sup> He continues: “Those were terrible times for us. The government had us in their sights. And we were also military targets for the guerrillas. We lived, literally, under the constant shadow of threats and attacks.”<sup>161</sup> Or, as another ARENA founder recalls: “We began this struggle twenty-five years ago [in 1979], certain that we would not come out of it alive... It was hard. They persecuted and slandered us in unspeakable ways.”<sup>162</sup> As he put it on another occasion: “This party is the product of a titanic effort made...while they persecuted and slandered us.

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<sup>158</sup> Quoted in Galeas (2011: 270).

<sup>159</sup> As Armando Calderón Sol explains: “The certainty of fraud was practically absolute among us...and what we proposed to D’Aubuisson was that he not accept the results” (quoted in Galeas 2004: 33-34). See also ARENA (2011: 48).

<sup>160</sup> Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in Galeas (2011: 102).

<sup>161</sup> Guillermo Sol Bang, quoted in Galeas (2011: 92).

<sup>162</sup> Fernando Sagrera, quoted in Galeas (2004: 8).

It was born in the harshness of hiding, prison, struggle and exile... [I]ts pioneers and best men were [the] thousands of anonymous peasants that risked and even lost their lives.”<sup>163</sup>

There is actually some truth to these claims. As discussed in Chapter 6, the United States channeled considerable funds to the Christian Democrats in an explicit attempt to defeat ARENA at the polls. There is also some truth to the claim that ARENA members were in “the sights” of various opposition forces. Multiple ARENA leaders and rank-and-file members were the victims of violence, such as shootings, kidnappings and assassinations. D’Aubuisson himself was shot (and survived) in February 1982,<sup>164</sup> as well as several of ARENA’s other founding leaders, including Hugo Barrera, D’Aubuisson’s running mate in the 1984 election; Guillermo Sol Bang, one of the party’s main fundraisers and a member of its National Executive Committee (COENA) during much of the 1980s and 1990s; and Ricardo Valdivieso, the ARENA “ideologue” described above.<sup>165</sup> Others did not survive such attacks. For example, in April 1982, David Joaquín Quinteros, an ARENA member recently elected to the constituent assembly, was assassinated;<sup>166</sup> in June 1983, René Barrios Amaya, another ARENA deputy, was assassinated;<sup>167</sup> in January 1984, Ricardo Arnoldo Pohl, yet another ARENA deputy, was assassinated;<sup>168</sup> and in June 1989, José Antonio Rodríguez Porth, an ARENA cabinet minister in the government of Alfredo Cristiani, was

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<sup>163</sup> Fernando Sagrera, quoted in Galeas (2004: 5).

<sup>164</sup> See Dial Torgerson, “Rightist Leader Wounded in El Salvador Campaign Violence,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1982.

<sup>165</sup> See Galeas (2004: 23; 2011: 94-100), Valdivieso (2008: 132-136) and ARENA (2011: 38-40).

<sup>166</sup> See “Salvador Rightist Slain by Gunmen,” *The Chicago Tribune* 5 April 1982.

<sup>167</sup> See “Right-Wing Party Official Assassinated in El Salvador,” *The Washington Post*, 29 June 1983.

<sup>168</sup> See “Rightist Salvador Legislator Slain by Gunmen,” *The New York Times*, 28 June 1984.

assassinated.<sup>169</sup> Such violence did not just affect ARENA leaders, but also extended to the rank-and-file. For example, in February 1982, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that “two carloads of attackers fired submachine guns and threw a grenade at a group of D’Aubuisson supporters in front of the Arena [*sic*] headquarters in San Salvador. Five people were wounded.”<sup>170</sup> Even more dramatic was the violence against ORDEN members. While ARENA’s claim that “tens of thousands” (Panamá 2005: 45) of ORDEN members were killed is an exaggeration, there is documentation of ORDEN members being executed in towns “liberated” by the guerrillas. In her study of insurgent collective action in El Salvador, Wood (2003: 96) describes the execution of several ORDEN members in Tenancingo after guerrillas took the town in 1979, and Dunkerley (1982: 175) writes that “[i]n the east of the country the situation was so bad that refugee camps had to be established for members of ORDEN and their families.” In a sympathetic study of one of the main guerrilla groups, Harnecker (1991: 137-138) also describes the execution of ORDEN members.

This narrative of struggle—one that blends reality and exaggeration—has provided ARENA with a powerful source of party cohesion. Most importantly, it has led to a strong sense of “*mística*,” a word that ARENA members, just like UDI members in Chile, use frequently to describe their party. According to party literature, “ARENA’s *mística* stems from its libertarian [*libertaria*] ideology, in the Salvadoran people’s willingness to struggle, and the party comes together in the defense of its objectives [against] the disinformation and attacks to which it is subjected by communists, socialists, Christian Democrats and useful

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<sup>169</sup> See “Salvadoran Cabinet Minister Assassinated,” *The Washington Post*, 10 June 1989.

<sup>170</sup> See Dial Torgerson, “Rightist Leader Wounded in El Salvador Campaign Violence,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1982.

fools.”<sup>171</sup> Investigative journalist Craig Pyes (Pyes 1983: 27-28) noted the importance of *mística* while reporting on ARENA in the early 1980s, writing that “[t]he concept is difficult to translate into English, but those who had *la mística* included the original underground cells of right-wing collaborators who started the party [ARENA] [and] members of the outlawed rural paramilitary organization ORDEN.” At its core, it meant a strong sense of mission and *esprit de corps* among ARENA members. It was also something that could not be stamped out through persecution; if anything, this only made it stronger. As one prominent national ARENA leader explains: “[T]hey killed a lot of our mayoral and legislative candidates. So, ARENA emerged as an ideological party within [a context] of suffering. This gave it *mística*, it gave it value and it gave it an *esprit de corps*. ARENA continued to organize within [the context] of that struggle.”<sup>172</sup>

Although this *mística* has arguably weakened over time as the Cold War has receded, it continues to play an important role in the life of the party and can be seen in—and is reinforced by—a series of party songs, rituals and symbols. One such ritual, as mentioned above, is the decision to launch party candidacies in Izalco, where the 1932 uprising began, drawing a direct line between the present day and nearly a century of anti-communist struggle. Another is the party’s anthem, which ARENA members sing with great enthusiasm at party events.<sup>173</sup> The anthem was written by D’Aubuisson and contains lines like “Fatherland yes, communism no!”; “Freedom is written in blood”; and “El Salvador will

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<sup>171</sup> See ARENA, “Cartilla de Formación Política,” 1988.

<sup>172</sup> Author’s interview with national ARENA leader, 26 September 2012.

<sup>173</sup> Author’s fieldwork observations from ARENA’s General Assembly, 30 September 2012.

be the tomb where the Reds meet their end.”<sup>174</sup> According to ARENA, it is a “war song,” and is meant to remind Salvadorans that “communism...still threatens the country, just like the guerrillas of the FMLN did during the 1980s, only now [the communists] use a jacket and tie.”<sup>175</sup> The line about freedom being written in blood, they claim, does not mean what it might seem. They claim that it does not refer to ARENA’s “death squad” origins (which they deny), but describes the suffering of ARENA activists. The incident that they say best describes the meaning of this line occurred on 26 February 1982, when two important ARENA leaders, Guillermo Sol Bang and Ricardo Valdivieso, were shot while delivering documents to register the party’s slate of candidates for the upcoming constituent assembly election. While both men survived, the party documents were stained with their blood—a graphic illustration, they say, of how, in the case of ARENA, freedom is literally “written in blood.”<sup>176</sup> These rituals and legends provide ARENA with a rich symbolic universe, in which its members can feel that they are part of a long and noble struggle. This has served to instill in them a sense of mission and camaraderie with fellow ARENA members, which makes defection from the party a difficult and unlikely choice. In this way, ARENA’s history of joint struggle has provided the party with a powerful source of cohesion. This is in stark contrast to Guatemala’s PAN, which lacked a comparable source of cohesion (see Chapter 8). Never having “fought in the trenches” together, there was little to keep PAN members united; the consequence was party schism and, ultimately, party collapse.

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<sup>174</sup> On the authorship of this song, the “*Marcha de ARENA*,” and for its full set of lyrics, see ARENA (2011: 29).

<sup>175</sup> Ernesto Rivas Gallont, quoted in ARENA (2011: 42-43).

<sup>176</sup> See Valdivieso (2008: 132-136, 144) and Galeas (2011: 94-100).

### *Business Connections*

The final form of authoritarian inheritance from which ARENA benefited was a close connection to business. The business community in El Salvador had long been highly organized, forming various associations to represent both sectoral and general business interests. Two of the oldest associations represented the coffee industry: the Salvadoran Association of Coffee Growers (ASCAFE, commonly referred to as the Cafetalera), which was created in the 1930s to represent coffee growers, and the Association of Coffee Processors and Exporters (ABECAFE), which was created in the 1940s to represent coffee growers who were also involved in processing and exporting.<sup>177</sup> Over time, a range of other business associations emerged, such as the Association of Salvadoran Industrialists (ASI), the Association of Sugar Processors and the Bankers' Association.<sup>178</sup> In addition to these sectoral associations, two broader associations were also created. One was the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which "represented a large number of diverse firms and became the principal voice of the Salvadoran elite" (Johnson 1998: 125). In the 1960s, El Salvador's first business peak association was created: the National Association of Private Enterprise (ANEP). By the 1970s, ANEP encompassed over 25 different sectoral organizations.<sup>179</sup> ANEP and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry were largely dominated by traditional landowning interests, who used their power "to ensure that their interests took precedence over those of the agro-industrial and the industrial bourgeoisie" (Johnson 1998: 126).<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> See Johnson (1998: 124) and Paige (1997).

<sup>178</sup> See Johnson (1998: 131).

<sup>179</sup> See Johnson (1998: 126).

<sup>180</sup> See Johnson (1998: 125-126).

El Salvador's business associations had been stalwart supporters of the pre-1979 military regime. As "defenders of the authoritarian *ancién* regime" (Johnson 1998: 123), they supported the military's right to rule and, in return, were granted a central role in economic policymaking. This occurred through both formal and informal channels. Formally, business associations were given seats on various economic policymaking commissions. Both ANEP and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry had seats on the National Economic and Planning Council, "which produced most of the government's legislation" (Johnson 1993: 87-88). Business associations also had seats on councils with more specific mandates, such as the National Council on Social Security and the National Council on Minimum Wages, while labor and peasant groups were excluded (Johnson 1993: 88). Later, when a new economic "super-ministry" was created, the Ministry of Planning and Coordination of Economic and Social Development (MIPLAN), ANEP and the Chamber were both given formal representation (Johnson 1998: 127). Business associations also exercised power through ministerial appointments. For example, "[f]rom the 1930s until the early 1960s, members of the *Cafetalera*...were regularly rewarded with ministerial portfolios, such as Treasury, Agriculture, and the Central Bank" (Johnson 1998: 124). In addition to these formal channels, business associations influenced policy through "informal, personal connections to government and military officials in order to influence policy" (Johnson 1998: 124). By the 1970s, "ANEP proved powerful enough to acquire an informal veto over the military's selection of presidential candidates" (Johnson 1998: 126).

In the late 1960s, the relationship between business and the military regime became cooler. As discussed in Chapter 6, while the pre-1979 military regime was, on balance, a highly effective guardian of the interests of Salvadoran elites, it was not entirely beholden to

them and did, on occasion, pursue mildly reformist policies. During the presidencies of Fidel Sánchez Hernández (1967-1972) and Arturo Molina (1972-1977), the military provoked the wrath of business when it attempted to carry out modest land reforms. The first land reform attempts prompted an unsuccessful challenge to the official military candidate in the 1972 presidential election by none other than General José Alberto Medrano, the founder of ORDEN and ANSESAL, who created a new electoral vehicle for the occasion called the Independent United Democratic Front (FUDI).<sup>181</sup> According to Johnson (1998: 127), “[t]he conservative leadership of the Chamber, ANEP, and the agrarian associations threw their support behind FUDI, forcing the military’s official party to scuttle plans for agrarian reform temporarily.” During Molina’s presidency, business associations again expressed its displeasure: “The Cafetalera, ANEP, and the Chamber again mounted a highly aggressive public relations campaign against the government and its ‘communist-inspired’ policies. In addition, coffee growers and ranchers formed a new association, [the] Eastern Agrarian Front [FARO]...to fight the land reform” (Johnson 1998: 128).<sup>182</sup> Yet, while there was distancing between the military and parts of the business community during this period, there was never a true rupture. In fact, ANEP reportedly used its influence to have hardliner General Carlos Humberto Romero nominated as the regime’s official candidate for the 1977 presidential election.<sup>183</sup> During Romero’s short-lived presidency (1977-1979), “the antireformist interests of ANEP’s leadership became the sole political focus of the state, which launched a national security campaign against communist

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<sup>181</sup> On FUDI, see Dunkerley (1982: 84-85) and Johnson (1998: 127).

<sup>182</sup> On FARO, see Dunkerley (1982: 65, 73) and Johnson (1998: 127-128).

<sup>183</sup> See Johnson (1993: 155-156; 1998: 128).



subversion” (Johnson 1998: 128). Thus, while business did not dominate economic policymaking as fully as it had in previous decades, it still maintained tremendous influence. According to Johnson (1998: 128), in 1979, business associations still controlled several branches of the “economic bureaucracy,” including the ministries of the economy, treasury and foreign trade, as well as the Central Reserve Bank and the Coffee Marketing Board.

The true rupture between business and the state—and the event that would eventually lead business to support a new party-building project, ARENA—was caused by the October 1979 coup. As described above and in Chapter 6, the military-civilian juntas that took power after the coup introduced far-reaching reforms, including land reform, the nationalization of the banking system and the nationalization of the export sector. These reforms were not only materially damaging for much of the business community, but also resulted in their exclusion from the policymaking apparatus. Indeed, “[t]he period from 1979-82 represents the nadir of the business elites’ political fortunes” (Johnson 1993: 160). Because business had supported President Romero, “the move by junior officers to oust Romero also meant that the agrarian elites were forced to the political sidelines” (Johnson 1993: 160). Business’ exclusion from power arguably became even more marked after the fall of the first junta and its replacement by a military-Christian Democratic junta. After José Napoleón Duarte became provisional president of the junta in 1981, he “barred ANEP and the Chamber from sitting on government planning boards and councils, and he refused to consult with them, even informally” (Johnson 1998: 130).<sup>184</sup> This created a nearly unprecedented situation for business. Even during the rocky period during the presidencies of Sánchez Hernández and Molina, business had kept its seat on various policymaking

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<sup>184</sup> See also Dunkerley (1982: 149).

commissions and retained influence. After 1979, however, business found itself completely “[s]hut out of government” (Johnson 1998: 130). In Gaspar’s (1989: 44, 129) telling phrase, business had been “politically orphaned”: “In this way, the installation of a reformist government...left the private sector on the margins of power, bereft of an efficient instrument of political representation and on the defensive in the face of two hegemonic projects that coincided in denouncing it as responsible for the country’s crisis.”

Business responded to the threat of the post-1979 juntas with a policy of frontal opposition. At the time, it was possible to divide the business community into what Johnson (1998) calls “hard-liners” and “soft-liners,”<sup>185</sup> which corresponded closely to what Paige (1997) calls “agrarians” and “agro-industrialists,” respectively.<sup>186</sup> Because of its dependence on labor-repressive agriculture, “[t]he agrarian fraction ha[d] been a bulwark of authoritarian politics throughout the region” (Paige 1997: 55). In contrast, because it was less dependent on this form of agriculture, “[t]he agro-industrial fraction [was] less closely tied to the authoritarian order and, under some circumstances, more open to democratic initiatives” (Paige 1997: 55). The agrarians had long dominated El Salvador’s most important business associations,<sup>187</sup> and they continued to do in the immediate aftermath of the 1979 coup.<sup>188</sup> These hardliners responded to their exclusion from power by engaging in new forms of political activism. Thus, “the associations representing ranchers, cotton growers, and coffee producers pooled their remaining political capital to form the Productive Alliance (*Alianza Productiva*—AP). Barred from access to institutionalized

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<sup>185</sup> In an earlier work, Johnson (1993) called these two groups “confronters” and “bargainers.”

<sup>186</sup> On the distinction between “agrarians” and “agro-industrialists,” see Paige (1997: 53-95, 187-218).

<sup>187</sup> See Johnson (1998: 126).

<sup>188</sup> See Johnson (1998: 130, 132).

channels and with little room for bargaining, the AP resorted to highly public and confrontational strategies in its attempt to prevent the implementation of the government's reforms" (Johnson 1998: 131). Business elites also relied on more illicit tactics, including "a fair amount of threats, economic blackmail, terrorism and violence to attempt to influence political outcomes during this period" (Johnson 1993: 161). In the process, they found common cause with Roberto D'Aubuisson, who had become a prominent symbol of the old order and one of the most intransigent opponents of the changes underway since October 1979. In this way, business' actions during this period were part of the more general process (see above), whereby economic elites closed ranks behind D'Aubuisson, a trustworthy hardliner from the old regime. Business would eventually play a central role in the founding of ARENA: "At its official founding on September 30, 1981, ARENA was a coalition of D'Aubuisson and his backers on the hard right and the Alianza Productiva (Productive Alliance), itself a coalition of conservative industrialists and businessmen that included much of the traditional oligarchy" (Paige 1997: 35).

ARENA continued to enjoy the strong backing of the business community over time. Indeed, there is probably no other party in Latin America that has such a close relationship to business, with the possible exception of what Barndt (forthcoming) calls "corporation-based parties."<sup>189</sup> However, the relative importance of different business factions within ARENA gradually shifted, with soft-liners becoming increasingly influential. This mirrored a broader shift in the business community, which was partially due to structural changes in

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<sup>189</sup> According to Barndt (forthcoming), "corporation-based parties" are parties formed by individual conglomerates, such as Democratic Change in Panama, which grew out of Ricardo Martinelli's Super 99 supermarket chain. It would be impossible for a party to have closer links to business than this. What is unclear, though, is whether these "parties" really deserve to be labeled as such, or whether they are merely personalist electoral vehicles. This topic will be discussed more in the concluding chapter of this study.

the economy caused by the civil war. As Wood (2000b) has documented, the war devastated the country's traditional agricultural sector, and caused Salvadorans to flee the country in great numbers. As the national economy became less dependent on agriculture and more dependent on remittances from émigrés, the economy's center of gravity shifted to sectors such as retail and financial services.<sup>190</sup> Since businesspeople belonging to these sectors did not depend on labor-repressive agriculture for their livelihood, they tended to be soft-liners. This process was aided by the creation of FUSADES in 1983 (see above), which "permitted the soft-liners to develop a measure of institutional autonomy from the hard-liners, who controlled ANEP and were leading public opposition to reforms undertaken during the contentious period of 1982-1984" (Johnson 1998: 132). Indeed, "[f]rom 1983 to 1986, FUSADES effectively replaced the traditional business associations, such as the Chamber and ANEP, in acting as the voice of business" (Johnson 1998: 130). As a result of these processes, business soft-liners became increasingly important within ARENA; however, the basic fact of overwhelming business support for the party did not change.

One powerful indicator of the role of business in ARENA can be seen in the party's leadership. As Koivumaeki (2010: 91) notes: "Out of the four ARENA presidents, three, Alfredo Cristiani (1989-1994), Armando Calderón Sol (1994-1999), and Antonio Saca (2004-2009), were prominent businessmen." In the case of Cristiani, his "family firm was in 1980-81 the tenth largest coffee processing firm in El Salvador" (Paige 1997: 3). He had also been president of ABECAFE, one of the main business associations for the coffee sector, and

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<sup>190</sup> As Wood (2000b: 63) explains: "The obvious 'winners' were those who controlled significant shares in the booming sectors: the courier companies that transferred remittances, the financial intermediaries that exchanges colones for dollars, the retail sector where they were spent, the import houses that provided the goods, and the real estate and construction companies. The commercial interests of many economic elites rapidly expanded, as the proliferation in the late 1980s of fast-food restaurants, gas stations, and shopping malls attests."

was a founding member of FUSADES.<sup>191</sup> Indeed, the overlap between ARENA and FUSADES in the late 1980s became so great that “[a] comparison of ARENA’s economic proposals during the campaign[s] [of 1988 and 1989] and those advocated by FUSADES shows them to be virtually identical,” and Cristiani’s economic team as president “consisted largely of ‘FUSADES boys’ ” (Johnson 1998: 136). Similarly, Calderón Sol was a scion of a prominent coffee dynasty, and had held leadership positions in both FUSADES and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>192</sup> Saca was also a successful businessman, and had been the president of ANEP.<sup>193</sup> As mentioned above, at one point ARENA’s National Executive Committee (COENA) became so thoroughly dominated by businesspeople that it was referred to within the party as the “oligarchic COENA,” with one prominent ARENA founder accusing the party of selling out and becoming “ARENA, Inc.”<sup>194</sup> Businesspeople were also well-represented among ARENA deputies and mayoral candidates.<sup>195</sup> The upshot is that “[t]he party identity of ARENA has always been defined in great part by businesspeople” (Koivumaekei 2010: 90). In fact, it is not an exaggeration to describe ARENA as “the party of the right-wing private sector as a whole” (Norton 1991: 204).

The support of the business community was a crucial determinant of ARENA’s success.<sup>196</sup> Most importantly, it allowed ARENA to tap its business allies for donations.

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<sup>191</sup> See Paige (1997: 188-189).

<sup>192</sup> See Paige (1997: 23) and Johnson (1998: 135).

<sup>193</sup> See Galeas and Galeas (2009: 33) and Schneider (2012: 119).

<sup>194</sup> As Galeas and Galeas (2009: 19-20) explain: “The 2003 COENA was comprised, in its majority, by a group of men who were extremely successful in the world of business, but without major experience in political activity and party leadership.” The term “ARENA, Inc.” was coined by ARENA founder Mercedes Gloria Salguero Gross (quoted in Galeas and Galeas 2009: 20).

<sup>195</sup> See Koivumaekei (2010: 91-92).

<sup>196</sup> For a similar argument, see Koivumaekei (2010).

According to the director of a political consulting firm that has managed many of ARENA's campaigns, between 70 and 80 percent of the party's financing comes from the business sector.<sup>197</sup> It is not uncommon for multiple businesspeople to donate one million dollars apiece at election time to finance the party's campaign.<sup>198</sup> In short, "the entire business sector is very united and feels a responsibility to support the party."<sup>199</sup> This has allowed ARENA's spending during campaigns to be "in a different league" (Wood 2000a: 249) than other parties. Based on available data, Koivumäki (2014: 278) calculates that "[o]ver the course of the 1990s and 2000s, ARENA spent more on television, radio, and print advertisement than any of its competitors... ARENA used about three times more funds on ads in the campaigns of 1994, 2004, and 2006 than the main opposition party, FMLN. While ARENA's resource advantage decreased in 2009, it still outspent FMLN by two to one."<sup>200</sup> This spending advantage, along with the party's close relationship with most privately-owned media outlets, allowed ARENA to dominate the airwaves. Thus, in the 2004 presidential election, ARENA "controlled more than 64 per cent of the political advertising market in TV, radio and newspapers, while the FMLN retained a mere 24.61 per cent and the remaining opposition parties were effectively excluded" (Wolf 2009: 455).

To summarize, ARENA's inheritance of business connections was a crucial factor in the party's success. This occurred through both direct and indirect means. ARENA directly inherited the support of much of the business community because it was the party of

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<sup>197</sup> Author's interview with ARENA political consultant, 29 October 2012.

<sup>198</sup> Author's interview with ARENA political consultant, 29 October 2012.

<sup>199</sup> Author's interview with ARENA political consultant, 29 October 2012.

<sup>200</sup> On ARENA's spending advantage, see also Vickers and Spence (1994: 8) and Wood (2000a: 249).

D'Aubuisson. As a trustworthy incumbent of the old regime—a regime in which business had been well-represented—D'Aubuisson's struggle to return the country to the old order received strong backing from businesspeople, especially business hardliners. In addition, ARENA may have indirectly inherited further support from business once it became clear that it was a viable contender. Following ARENA's strong performance in its debut election of 1982—a performance that was largely the result of the party's inherited brand and territorial organization—business support, already strong, appears to have become even stronger. In the words of one ARENA founder, the party's "credibility came when they [business] saw that we were really capable, when they saw that we won the first election... The thing is, many of the people who finance political parties or that help political parties do not want to throw their money away. But when they see that [the party] can win, they say, 'Okay, this party looks good.' And that is what happened with ARENA. After the first election, we received much more help for the party than before."<sup>201</sup> This second mechanism may explain why business softliners such as Alfredo Cristiani gravitated to ARENA while it was still in its radical early phase. The party was clearly a winner, and thus worth betting on.

### Alternative Explanations

In the previous section, I examined several forms of authoritarian inheritance from which ARENA benefited, and argued that these were the main determinants of its success under democracy. In this final section, I briefly examine three alternative explanations. This section is intended to serve as a complement to the "existing explanations" section in

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<sup>201</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.

Chapter 1, and thus focuses on explanations specific to El Salvador, and ones likely to occur to readers knowledgeable about the Salvadoran case. I examine three alternative explanations: (1) assistance from the military, (2) the decline of the Christian Democrats and (3) Alfredo Cristiani's ascent to the party presidency.

### *Assistance from the Military*

As discussed in Chapter 6 and above, ARENA's founders were deeply involved in "death squad" violence after the 1979 coup and, in fact, the party continued to participate in such violence even after some of its leaders had reached positions of importance. Moreover, between 1982 and 1994, El Salvador was not a full democracy, given the *de facto* electoral exclusion of the left and the tutelary powers exercised by the military. Given these considerations, one might think that ARENA's success was mainly the result of assistance from the military, including direct coercion on behalf of the party.<sup>202</sup>

There is some truth to such claims. As discussed above, D'Aubuisson made use of his connections in the military to avoid capture and to have his anti-communist denunciations broadcast on television, which launched his political career. Moreover, there is evidence that some retired and active-duty soldiers directly aided ARENA's organizational effort. As one ARENA founder explains: "Some people who had been in...the army, who were now discharged or that were in the army reserves, joined [the party] and started to do their own work at the local [*cantonal*] and territorial level, which helped us a lot."<sup>203</sup> This

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<sup>202</sup> Wantchekon (1999) offers a variant of this argument. In his analysis of the 1994 election, he argues that ARENA played the "fear card"—namely, that if the FMLN won the election, the country's civil war might resume. He argues that "[t]he fact that some death squads were still operating with impunity helped make these threats credible" (Wantchekon 1999: 829).

<sup>203</sup> Author's interview with national ARENA leader, 29 October 2012.



support may have also extended to active-duty soldiers and even parts of the high command. As McClintock (1985: 293) explains: “Convincing evidence that ARENA and D’Aubuisson enjoyed the army high command’s blessing was the support of the regional military commanders who, in the past, had been responsible for mobilizing the military reservists and ORDEN members behind the PCN. In provincial areas ARENA rallies were generally composed overwhelmingly of the former military personnel who comprise the bulk of ORDEN and military reserves alike. Much was made of Major D’Aubuisson’s personal charisma and organizational skill, but there were quite clearly other factors.” Thus, in the lead-up to the March 1982 election, Christian Democratic leaders “formally complained that military commanders in various towns around the country were actively aiding the Nationalist Republicans [ARENA].”<sup>204</sup> At times, parts of the military may have even aided the party through outright coercion. According to one journalist covering the 1984 presidential election, “ARENA is waging an equally tough campaign in the countryside. Leaders of...the country’s largest peasant organization now charge that D’Aubuisson supporters within the government have threatened hundreds of peasants with violence if they do not vote for ARENA... ARENA seems to be trying to bully votes where its reactionary ideology can’t win them.”<sup>205</sup>

Nevertheless, there are at least three reasons to doubt that military assistance was the most important cause of ARENA’s long-term success. First, there seems to have been a

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<sup>204</sup> See Warren Hoge, “Candidate Favoring Napalm Use Gains in Salvador,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1982. Similarly, Christian Democratic leader José Napoleón Duarte (1986: 194) recalls in his memoir that during the 1984 presidential election, “several military officers supported d’Aubuisson,” and used their clout to help the ARENA candidate. Before one Christian Democratic rally, for example, the military began to press-gang young men of military age on their way to the rally. Whether legal or not, the timing was obviously political and had the expected cooling effect: “Every young man of draft age stayed home” (Duarte 1986: 194).

<sup>205</sup> See Craig Canine and Robert Rivard, “El Salvador: The Making of a President,” *Newsweek*, 5 March 1984.

decent correspondence between voter preferences and electoral results. While few accurate polls were taken during this period due to the civil war, one journalist reported prior to the March 1982 election that “[a]ccording to one reasonably scientific poll, the Christian Democrats and the far-right Arena are running dead even, with each expected to gain about 30% of the votes.”<sup>206</sup> This prediction was accurate: ARENA won just under 30 percent of the vote in the 1982 election. Second, while it may be true that ARENA was “openly backed by the army” (McClintock 1985: 293), the same was also true for the PCN, the “official” party of the old regime.<sup>207</sup> Yet, despite this support, the PCN never enjoyed anywhere near the support enjoyed by ARENA, suggesting that something other than military support was the main cause of ARENA’s success. Third, and most importantly, ARENA continued to perform extremely well in the 1990s and 2000s after the end of the civil war and the transition to full democracy. If the main cause of the party’s success were support from the military, we would expect the party’s support to decline after the transition to democracy. But it did not. All of this suggests that while military assistance may have been useful to ARENA during the 1980s, it was not the decisive factor in the party’s success.

### *Decline of the Christian Democrats*

A second alternative explanation is the decline of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC). As discussed above and in Chapter 6, the PDC had been the most important opposition party during the pre-1979 military regime, and played a key role in government in

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<sup>206</sup> See Kenneth Freed, “Salvadoran Rightist Wraps Up Campaign,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 24 March 1982.

<sup>207</sup> In McClintock’s (1985: 292-293) words: “Although the Department of State depicted D’Aubuisson as virtually a renegade officer, an image generally reflected in the international press, his party was given extensive logistical support by the armed forces, support it shared only with the former official Party of National Conciliation (PCN).”

the decade after the October 1979 coup: it was part of all of the military-civilian juntas between 1979 and 1982; it was the biggest party in the constituent assembly from 1982 to 1985; and in 1984 and 1985, it won the presidency and a majority in the legislature, respectively. In the late 1980s, however, the PDC entered into terminal decline, for a few reasons.<sup>208</sup> First, despite promises to bring an end to the civil war and reactivate the economy, the presidency (1984-1989) of PDC leader José Napoleón Duarte was, by all accounts, disastrous. The civil war raged on and the economy was in a tailspin, with high inflation and anemic growth. Second, Duarte's government was also accused of corruption and mismanagement of relief efforts after an earthquake struck San Salvador in 1986. Third, Duarte was diagnosed with terminal cancer while in office, leading to a succession struggle that resulted in a formal split in the PDC prior to the 1989 presidential election. The breakaway party, called the Authentic Christian Movement (MAC), took with it over half of the PDC's congressional representatives and mayors. For all of these reasons, the PDC hemorrhaged votes during the 1990s, declining from El Salvador's dominant party to a relatively minor one.<sup>209</sup> It is likely that this decline facilitated ARENA's rise. D'Aubuisson's frequent assertion that Christian Democrats were "communists" was false; like Christian Democrats in most places, El Salvador's Christian Democrats were distrustful of the radical left. It is therefore likely that some voters who had traditionally supported the PDC (especially more conservative Christian Democrats), but who had become disillusioned with the party for the reasons mentioned above, opted to support ARENA in the 1990s.

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<sup>208</sup> This paragraph draws on García (1989: 79-80); Norton (1991: 196-197); Montgomery (1995: 201-202, 208-209, 214); and Williams and Seri (2003: 312-313).

<sup>209</sup> For the electoral history of El Salvador's Christian Democrats, see Williams and Seri (2003: 311).

Yet, while it is likely that the PDC's decline gave ARENA an electoral boost, there are two reasons to doubt that this factor was a decisive cause of ARENA's success. The first reason is comparative. Guatemala's Christian Democrats played a similar role in their country in the 1980s as El Salvador's Christian Democrats (see Chapter 8). The Guatemalan party dominated elections during the latter half of the decade, winning the presidency in 1985 and a legislative majority.<sup>210</sup> But, like El Salvador's Christian Democrats, it entered into rapid decline in the 1990s and shriveled into a minor party. In the short term, this may have benefited Guatemala's Party of National Advancement (PAN), which grew rapidly over the course of the 1990s (see Chapter 8). However, the PAN did not enjoy long-term success, collapsing in the early 2000s. The variation in outcomes between El Salvador's ARENA and Guatemala's PAN, despite the decline of Christian Democratic parties in both countries, suggests that some other factor was responsible. Simply put, a constant value on a hypothesized independent variable (decline in Christian Democratic parties) cannot explain variation on the dependent variable (ARENA's success versus the PAN's failure). Second, even if ARENA did receive a boost from the PDC's decline, this cannot be the main cause of the party's success for a simple reason: ARENA was already an electoral juggernaut in the mid-1980s, when the PDC was at the height of its popularity. In the 1982 and 1985 elections, for example, ARENA won 29.3 percent and 29.7 percent, respectively, putting it well above the electoral threshold for successful party-building used in this study. The upshot is that while it is likely that the decline of the PDC freed up votes for ARENA and helped it to become even more successful, ARENA was already a massive vote-getter before the PDC's decline.

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<sup>210</sup> For the electoral history of Guatemala's Christian Democrats, see Williams and Seri (2003: 320).

*Alfredo Cristiani's Ascent to the Party Presidency*

One final alternative explanation that must be considered is the ascent of Alfredo Cristiani to the party presidency. As discussed above, in 1985, Roberto D'Aubuisson stepped aside as ARENA president in favor of Cristiani, a mild-mannered businessman who was, in many ways, the polar opposite of D'Aubuisson. The goal of this leadership shake-up was to present a more moderate image, both in order to broaden the party's electoral appeal and to appease the United States. According to Wood (2000a; 2000b), this moderation was instrumental in allowing ARENA to succeed. As she explains: "In little more than a decade, ARENA evolved from an extreme right-wing party without a broad political base to become the dominant political party in the country" (Wood 2000b: 70). In other words, under D'Aubuisson, ARENA was a loser; under Cristiani, it became a winner.

Once again, it is probably true that ARENA received an electoral boost from Cristiani's ascent to the party presidency. As discussed above, D'Aubuisson did not disappear from the scene after Cristiani became party president. Instead, he retained the formal title of "Honorary President" of ARENA, and actively campaigned on behalf of Cristiani. This likely created a best-of-both-worlds scenario: voters attracted to D'Aubuisson's extremism could focus on his role in the party; voters who were repelled by it, however, could focus on the inoffensive figure of Cristiani. It is very likely that the clean-cut image of Cristiani—together with the decline of the Christian Democrats—helps to explain why ARENA increased its share of the vote in legislative elections from 29.7 percent in 1985 (while D'Aubuisson was party president) to 48.1 percent in 1988 (when Cristiani was party president). Once again, though, this factor cannot be the main cause of ARENA's success for a simple reason: ARENA was already electorally strong before Cristiani took over. It is

not accurate to describe ARENA prior to this as a “party without a broad political base” (Wood 2000b: 70). The fact that ARENA won 29.3 and 29.7 percent, respectively, in the 1982 and 1985 elections, meant that it had already crossed the threshold for successful party-building used in this volume, and was far stronger than other new parties in Latin America that are universally regarded as successful.<sup>211</sup> In short, moderation cannot explain ARENA’s success in its early years when, by all accounts, it was an utterly immoderate party.

### Conclusion

In this chapter and in Chapter 6, I examined the case of ARENA, a clear case of successful party-building and an authoritarian successor party. I argued that ARENA’s success and its status as an authoritarian successor party were linked: because of its roots in the pre-1979 military regime, ARENA became the beneficiary of valuable forms of authoritarian inheritance. Paradoxically, its roots in dictatorship helped it to succeed under democracy. In this respect, the story of ARENA is similar to that of the UDI. Although Chile and El Salvador are as different as any two countries in Latin America, the cause of successful party-building in both countries, I argued, was the same. In both cases, parties with deep roots in former authoritarian regimes—that, is authoritarian successor parties—not only survived transitions to democracy, but thrived. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the story of Guatemala was very different. While there were many parallels between El Salvador and Guatemala, including labor-repressive agriculture, repressive military rule,

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<sup>211</sup> For example, Brazil’s Workers’ Party (PT), which is widely considered to be one of the great cases of successful party-building in contemporary Latin America, has never won more than 18.4 percent (the amount it won in 2002) in a national legislative election.

powerful guerrilla insurgencies and the timing of democratization, the experiences of conservative party-building in the two countries were markedly different. Unlike in El Salvador, no conservative authoritarian successor party emerged in Guatemala at the end of military rule (though, interestingly, a non-conservative authoritarian successor party did emerge, which I discuss). Instead, the most important new conservative party to emerge at the end of military rule in Guatemala was the PAN, a party with strong democratic credentials. While the PAN would experience short-term electoral success, it would suffer devastating schisms in the early 2000s and then collapse. As I argue in the next chapter, a major cause of the PAN's failure was the absence of authoritarian inheritance.

## CHAPTER 8

### Guatemala's PAN: Democratic Credentials and Party-Building Failure

On 30 April 2003, Guatemala's National Advancement Party (PAN) committed suicide. On that day, the executive committee of the country's most important conservative party retracted the nomination of its popular presidential candidate, Óscar Berger, six months before the upcoming general election.<sup>1</sup> Berger had recently won a party primary by an overwhelming margin, and he had a massive lead in national polls.<sup>2</sup> The ostensible reason for the retraction was that Berger had violated the PAN's internal statutes; in reality, it was the culmination of a long process of infighting for control of the party. After losing the PAN nomination, Berger opted to run as the candidate of a coalition of smaller parties, and managed to win the presidency without the PAN's support. The PAN did not recover as gracefully. Its presidential candidate came in fourth place, and its yield in the legislative election plummeted. In subsequent elections, it did even worse, winning a mere 3.1 percent in the 2011 legislative election (see Figure 8.1). By 2014, it had only one deputy in Congress. By all accounts, the PAN had collapsed, a clear case of party-building failure.

The collapse of the PAN in the 2000s was a surprising outcome, in light of the party's strong performance in the 1990s and the parallels between its rise and that of ARENA in neighboring El Salvador. Like ARENA, the PAN was created in the 1980s against the backdrop of civil war and a partial transition to democracy. After decades of

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<sup>1</sup> See "Quitan a Berger la candidatura," *La Prensa Libre*, 1 May 2003.

<sup>2</sup> In the November 2002 primary, 75 percent of PAN voters opted for Berger as the party's presidential candidate. A poll in January 2003 found that 45.1 percent of Guatemalans intended to vote for Berger in that year's election, putting him 35 points ahead of the runner-up. See "Berger acumula 118 mil 493 votos," *La Prensa Libre*, 19 November 2002, and "Oscar Berger y el PAN, a la cabeza," *La Prensa Libre*, 15 January 2003.



direct military rule and in the face of a guerrilla insurgency, the Guatemalan military announced elections for a constituent assembly in 1984, to be followed by a general election in 1985. Like ARENA, the PAN was created to contest these new elections. In 1985, Álvaro Arzú, a prominent businessman, created a “civic committee” to run for mayor in Guatemala City, with the intention of participating in national elections in the future.<sup>3</sup> Arzú won the mayoralty, and in subsequent national elections, the PAN performed well. In 1990, its debut national election, it won 17.3 percent of the legislative vote, and in 1995, it won a whopping 34.3 percent of the legislative vote and launched Arzú to the presidency. As occurred during the presidency (1989-1994) of ARENA leader Alfredo Cristiani, President Arzú signed peace accords with the country’s guerrillas that put a definitive end to the country’s bloody civil war (Stanley 2007). Although the PAN lost the 1999 presidential election in the second round, it performed well in the legislative election, and was well-positioned to rebound in 2003. In short, the PAN seemed to have a bright future ahead of it. However, the party experienced two devastating schisms—first with the departure of Arzú in 2000, then with the departure of Berger in 2003—which ensured that, unlike El Salvador’s ARENA, this promise would never be realized. What explains the PAN’s failure?

In this chapter, I argue that much of the PAN’s failure can be explained, paradoxically, by its strong democratic credentials. Although the PAN and ARENA had many superficial similarities, they differed in a fundamental respect: ARENA was an authoritarian successor party, and the PAN was not. Both were conservative parties, drawing their core constituencies from the upper strata of society, but they had very

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<sup>3</sup> As will be discussed below, “civic committees” are a category of electoral vehicle established by Guatemalan law. Civic committees, which are easier to register than parties, allow candidates to run for municipal office, but not for national office. However, they are understood to be a stepping-stone in the process of party formation, and from the beginning, PAN founders intended to create a party to compete at the national level.

different relationships to their countries' former dictatorships. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, ARENA was founded by Roberto D'Aubuisson, the former deputy director of military intelligence and an important actor in El Salvador's long-lasting military regime. As a result, ARENA was able to draw on multiple forms of authoritarian inheritance, including a party brand, territorial organization, business connections and party cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. The PAN, in contrast, was formed by "a group of technocrats and business people" (Trudeau 1993: 147) and had only the most tenuous of links to Guatemala's previous military regime. This meant that the PAN did not have access to authoritarian inheritance and, as such, was born in a much weaker position than ARENA. Although it overcame the challenges faced by new parties enough to perform well in a handful of elections, it lacked the essential ingredients for successful party-building in the long run. Most importantly, the PAN lacked an effective source of party cohesion, since its members had not "fought in the trenches" together in an authoritarian regime. This made the PAN prone to division, a weakness exacerbated by the strategy party leaders pursued in their effort to obtain a territorial organization. Since the PAN could not inherit an organization from the old regime, it was forced to make alliances with local bosses of existing parties. These newcomers helped the PAN to establish a nationwide presence; however, they had little natural loyalty to its founding leaders and, eventually, would play a key role in the uprisings against Arzú and Berger that would trigger the PAN's collapse.

In order to make this argument, this chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I describe Guatemala's previous authoritarian regime and eventual transition to democracy, and note the many parallels between the country's recent political history and that of El Salvador. In the second section, I ask why, given these parallels, no "Guatemalan

ARENA” formed. I argue that this was the result of one of the critical antecedents discussed in Chapter 2: the absence of a significant threat—understood as a radical leftist government actually assuming office—after the fall of the old regime. While both countries’ previous military regimes fell as a result of palace coups by junior officers (in October 1979 in El Salvador, in March 1982 in Guatemala), the new juntas that they established were very different. I argue that, for complex reasons, the junta in Guatemala, which was led by the ideologically ambiguous General Efraín Ríos Montt, impeded the emergence of a conservative authoritarian successor party. In the third section, I examine the rise of the PAN. I show that it was not an authoritarian successor party, and discuss the difficult choices that it was forced to make in order to compensate for its lack of authoritarian inheritance. In the final section, I examine the collapse of the PAN. I show that this was the result of party schisms, and argue that these were the product of two factors: the absence of a history of joint struggle, and a grassroots organization that was “borrowed” from other parties and, as such, lacking in loyalty to the PAN’s founding leaders.

### The Old Regime

In order to understand the rise and fall of the PAN, it is necessary to examine Guatemala’s old regime and the process that led to the transition to competitive elections in the 1980s and 1990s. Like El Salvador, Guatemala’s economy and politics had long been characterized by two closely related features. First, its economy since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had been based primarily on coffee, and coffee production took the form of what

Barrington Moore (1966) called “labor-repressive” agriculture.<sup>4</sup> A small elite dominated coffee production and exercised a level of control over land and labor that was arguably even more absolute than in El Salvador. As Paige (1997: 70) explains: “Guatemala is unique not only in the numbers of people and vast amounts of land controlled by its coffee elite, but also in the elaboration of an institutionalized system of forced labor backed by both the informal armed power of the coffee planters and the formal armed power of the state... Not even in El Salvador was such extensive control over land and people possible.” Using multiple forms of extra-economic coercion, ranging over the years from legally obligatory forced labor to debt peonage and anti-vagrancy laws, Guatemala had a “semi-feudal” economy based on “state-sanctioned forced labor” (Paige 1997: 75, 70) well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Second, following Moore (1966), this economic system was tightly intertwined with highly repressive authoritarian rule. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this took the form of what Mahoney (2001: 197) describes as “traditional authoritarianism,” albeit one in which “the military played a key role.” Using the coercive apparatus of the state, traditional dictatorships such as the regime (1931-1944) of Jorge Ubico were indispensable for enforcing draconian labor laws and keeping the rural population in check. One foreign visitor in 1908 is said to have commented that “Guatemala had so many soldiers that it looked like a penal colony” (Paige 1997: 70).

Between 1944 and 1954, this system of labor-repressive agriculture and authoritarian rule was placed in jeopardy during an episode known as the “Ten Years of Spring.”<sup>5</sup> In 1944,

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<sup>4</sup> On labor-repressive agriculture in Guatemala, see Stanley (1996: 25-26); Paige (1997); Yashar (1997); Mahoney (2001); and Acemoglu and Robinson (2006: 315).

<sup>5</sup> On the “Ten Years of Spring,” see Handy (1984: 103-147), Anderson (1988: 19-22), Yashar (1997: 119-137) and Mahoney (2001: 212-216).

following a series of student-led protests and a military uprising, long-time dictator Jorge Ubico was forced to resign and, in October of that year, was replaced by a progressive junta that initiated a transition to democracy.<sup>6</sup> The new junta oversaw the drafting of a democratic constitution and, in 1945, organized a presidential election that was “considered the fairest Guatemala had witnessed to date” (Handy 1984: 106). The victor was Juan José Arévalo, a civilian who advocated a philosophy called “spiritual socialism” (Handy 1984: 107). During his six-year administration (1945-1951), he increased social spending and implemented a number of progressive reforms, notably the creation of a labor code in 1947 that empowered labor unions and that recognized the rights to strike and collective bargaining.<sup>7</sup> His successor, Jacobo Arbenz, went even further, pledging in his inaugural speech to put an end to Guatemala’s “semi-colonial” and “feudal” economy and to “raise the standard of living of the great mass of our people.”<sup>8</sup> The central plank of Arbenz’s policy agenda was land reform, and beginning in early 1953, his government began to carry out expropriations of domestic- and foreign-owned estates at a rapid pace and on a large scale.<sup>9</sup> The Arévalo and Arbenz governments struck at the heart of Guatemala’s longstanding tradition of labor-repressive agriculture, since, as Yashar (1997: 120) explains, “[t]he labor code and land reform challenged the oligarchy’s access to cheap labor and control over land.” For elites, this was a terrifying turn of events, since their “primary basis of capital accumulation had

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<sup>6</sup> Ubico resigned in July 1944 and was initially replaced by a junta led by General Federico Ponce Vaides, who was “widely thought to be manipulated by Ubico,” and who, many feared, represented “*Ubiquismo* without Ubico” (Handy 1984: 105). In October, however, Ponce was overthrown in a military revolt and replaced by a more progressive junta in an event known in Guatemala as the “October Revolution” (Yashar 1997: 97).

<sup>7</sup> On the Arévalo government, see Handy (1984: 106-113) and Yashar (1997: 127-130).

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Handy (1984: 115).

<sup>9</sup> On the Arbenz government, see Handy (1984: 113-147) and Yashar (1997: 130-137).

grown out of control over land and over the laborers who had tended their plantations,” and since, moreover, they had long depended on the state “to bolster this process of debt peonage and agrarian capitalism” (Yashar 1997: 135).

In June 1954, Arbenz was overthrown in a coup following an invasion by a small U.S.-backed army of Guatemalan exiles and mercenaries calling itself the “Liberation Army.”<sup>10</sup> This occurred against the backdrop of increasingly virulent opposition to the Arbenz government by economic elites, the Catholic Church and a significant portion of the middle class.<sup>11</sup> The leader of the invasion, Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas, was soon installed as president and immediately began to reverse the reforms of the previous decade. The democratic constitution of 1945 was suspended, much of the population lost the right to vote, key elements of the 1947 labor code were rescinded and a wave of repression was unleashed against suspected “communists.”<sup>12</sup> Finally, the 1952 land reform was reversed and, “[i]n a remarkably quick time, over 99 per cent of the land affected by the agrarian reform was returned to previous owners” (Handy 1984: 187). In short, the Ten Years of Spring had come to an end, allowing for many of the practices of the past to resume: “The reversal of many of the reforms and the demobilization of labor and peasant movements created a space for the Guatemalan oligarchy to resume practices reminiscent of the [pre-1944] period. It was, therefore, able to recapture land and reinstate coercive labor practices, reestablishing the traditional regime of accumulation in the counterreform period” (Yashar 1997: 209).

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<sup>10</sup> For the definitive account of the U.S. role in the 1954 toppling of Arbenz, see Cullather (1999).

<sup>11</sup> See Yashar (1997: 191-206).

<sup>12</sup> See Handy (1984: 151, 186-189) and Yashar (1997: 206-210).

Yet, while the immediate danger posed to elites by the reformism of the 1944-1954 period had ended, the memory of this period endured. Indeed, much like the short-lived government of Arturo Araujo and the communist-led peasant uprising in 1931-1932 “hover[ed] like a brooding incubus over the collective consciousness of the Salvadoran political class” (Webre 1979: 8-9), the Ten Years of Spring became the defining event of modern Guatemalan politics. Writing in the late 1980s, Anderson (1988: 19) captured this when he wrote: “Modern Guatemala lives in the shadow of the abortive revolutionary movement of the late 1940s and early 1950s... Since the coup of 1954, which ended the period of reform, politics in Guatemala has to be seen mostly in the context of an attempt to keep the lid on the situation and prevent a return to the leftist reformism of the pre-1954 era.” In practical terms, the result was an arrangement between economic elites and the military that was similar to the one found in neighboring El Salvador. Using language nearly identical to Stanley (1996) in his discussion of El Salvador’s “protection racket state,”<sup>13</sup> Yashar (1997: 210) describes this arrangement as follows: “The redefinition of politics in post-reform Guatemala...[rested on] a political understanding between the Guatemalan military and oligarchy. The Guatemalan military assumed the right to govern in exchange for maintaining political order—particularly in the countryside.”

The military regime that took power in Guatemala in 1954 was similar to the one that took power in El Salvador in 1931.<sup>14</sup> Like El Salvador under the rule (1932-1944) of General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez, this initially took the form of “personalistic

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<sup>13</sup> According to Stanley (1996: 6-7), “the Salvadoran military state was essentially a protection racket: the military earned the concession to govern the country (and pillage the state) in exchange for its willingness to use violence against class enemies of the country’s relatively small but powerful economic elite.”

<sup>14</sup> On the similarities between the Salvadoran and Guatemalan military regimes, see Paige (1997: 6-7), Goodwin (2001: 180-213) and Mahoney (2001: 236-243).

military rule” (Mahoney 2001: 239).<sup>15</sup> In 1963, however, it assumed a more “institutionalist character” (Dunkerley 1988: 445), as in El Salvador after 1948.<sup>16</sup> For the next two decades, a fairly institutionalized system of military rule was established in Guatemala. Military rule was depersonalized and there was regular turnover in the country’s highest office, with “the question of executive transfer...standardized through the use of elections every four years in which fraud and repression ensured that officers representing the official military party controlled the presidency” (Mahoney 2001: 239). These elections were largely fictitious; Schirmer (1998: 18) found that the military officers she interviewed described the presidents who came to power during this period as “elected-but-appointed.” If the Guatemalan regime was less successful at establishing a single “official” party than its Salvadoran counterpart,<sup>17</sup> it exercised a greater degree of military control. In fact, even opposition

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<sup>15</sup> This occurred under the governments of Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas (1954-1957) and General Miguel Ydígoras Fuentes (1958-1963). Castillo Armas was assassinated in 1957, and Ydígoras Fuentes was overthrown in a coup in 1963, after which military rule in Guatemala took a less personalistic form.

<sup>16</sup> See also Schirmer (1998: 9) and Mahoney (2001: 239).

<sup>17</sup> As Anderson (1988: 28) explains: “The politics of the 1970s featured a perfection of the system of military rule. While in El Salvador this was accomplished through a single political party, the Guatemalan system allowed for a multiplicity of party organizations from which the army could pick and choose as the vehicle for its ‘official candidate.’” The first such pro-regime party was Castillo Armas’ National Liberation Movement (MLN), which remained active until the 1980s. The MLN was known for its virulent anticommunism and links to “death squad” activities, and described itself as “the party of organized violence” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 36). After the “institutionalist” coup of 1963, a new pro-regime party called the Institutional Democratic Party (PID) was created. The PID was explicitly modeled on Mexico’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), and “was meant to be a more moderate force than the rightist National Liberation Movement (MLN), and its ideological fluidity was to allow it to co-opt moderate reform ideas” (Handy 1984: 157-158). Sometimes the MLN and PID supported the same military candidates; at other times, they backed different candidates corresponding to different factions of the military (Handy 1984: 165, 272-273; Trudeau 1993: 48). Ultimately, however, “a cabal of top military officers made all important decisions” (Handy 1984: 181). As one Guatemalan military analyst explained: “The most important decisions concerning the political process of the country are discussed and decided within the army. Several of the legal political parties...in some ways represent the interests of the monopoly sector and they do decide minor matters such as the distribution of seats in congress, appointments of mayors and so on. However, the most important decisions—such as the struggles within the political parties, the selection of official candidates and alternate candidates for general elections and, finally, the turning over of power once the electoral process has been defined—were generally discussed and decided at the level of the high command and officers” (quoted in Handy 1984: 181).



parties such as the Christian Democrats (DCG) felt obliged to run military candidates.<sup>18</sup> As one DCG leader put it in the 1970s, “in Guatemala, it is useless to think of governing, except as the result of a political decision by the Army.”<sup>19</sup> Or, in the words of another opposition politician who was later assassinated: “Each new government is chosen by the military hierarchy and the oligarchy which negotiate on a presidential candidate... The army is the number one political party in the country.”<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, the holding of elections in Guatemala was a façade for a “military-authoritarian regime that...was one of the most repressive political systems in the history of Latin America” (Mahoney 2001: 238).

Against this backdrop of closed and highly repressive authoritarianism, there emerged one of Latin America’s longest-lasting guerrilla insurgencies.<sup>21</sup> The first guerrilla groups to appear were founded in the early 1960s by left-leaning military officers upset at the Guatemalan government’s hostility toward the Cuban Revolution. These groups carried out acts of terrorism, including the assassination of the U.S. ambassador in 1968; however, they “never mustered much support in the countryside, where they had mistakenly relied on great peasant cooperation; and their urban terrorism, though spectacular, was ineffective” (Anderson 1988: 26-27). By the late 1960s, in the face of violent military repression, this first wave of guerrilla groups had largely been wiped out. In the 1970s, however, a second

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<sup>18</sup> Thus, “during the 1970, 1974, and 1978 presidential elections, the Christian Democrats supported military candidates” (Williams and Seri 2003: 317).

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Trudeau (1993: 39).

<sup>20</sup> Manuel Colom Argueta, quoted in Handy (1984: 165).

<sup>21</sup> For an argument about why closed, extremely violent authoritarian regimes such as the one in Guatemala are conducive to the emergence and persistence of revolutionary groups, see Goodwin (2001).

wave emerged that posed a much more potent threat.<sup>22</sup> The most significant new group was called the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP),<sup>23</sup> which methodically—and, to a considerable degree, successfully<sup>24</sup>—attempted to build support among indigenous Guatemalans, particularly in the predominantly indigenous Western highlands. While scholars disagree about the true strength of Guatemala’s guerrillas in these years and their potential to take power, the risk of class war spilling over into race war added a new sense of urgency to the uprising.<sup>25</sup> As Garrard-Burnett (2010: 38) puts it: “[T]he horrifying prospect of such a coalition—Indians and communists united!—posed such a lethal threat to the civil-military regime that it demanded immediate action.” The response was increasingly brutal and widespread repression by the military and “death squads” linked to the state against anyone believed to be a guerrilla sympathizer.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Guatemala’s military regime entered a period of crisis. In line with Goodwin’s (2001) prediction, repression against guerrilla sympathizers had the paradoxical effect of increasing support for those very groups; in the face of extreme

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<sup>22</sup> These two waves of guerrilla mobilization in Guatemala corresponded to larger “waves” in Latin America: the first during the 1960s in imitation of the Cuban Revolution, and the second in the latter half of the 1970s in response to oppressive regimes. For a discussion of these waves, see Wickham-Crowley (2014).

<sup>23</sup> Other guerrilla groups active during these years were the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA) and the Guatemalan Labor Party (PGT). In 1982, these four groups merged into a single guerrilla confederation, the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity (URNG). For a description of these groups and their fusion into the URNG, see Allison (2006).

<sup>24</sup> According to Anderson (1988: 31), “[w]hereas almost no Indians had been involved in the guerrilla movement of the 1960s, the percentage of them in the present movement is considerable.” Similarly, Trudeau (1993: 41) writes that “[b]y 1980, the EGP was operating in several departments and was able to field fighting units composed of significant numbers of Indians.” Garrard-Burnett (2010: 39) cites reports that claim that by 1981, “at least a quarter of a million people in rural areas supported the guerrillas to some degree or another, from providing them with food, shelter, and communications to actually taking up arms.” Schirmer (1998: 61) estimates that the number of guerrilla supporters was even higher, writing that “by February 1982 the guerrilla forces could count on over 360,000 (and possibly up to 500,000) supporters.”

<sup>25</sup> As Slater (2010) has argued in the context of Southeast Asia, when class conflict and communal conflict overlap, the result is a particularly frightening mix for upper-class groups.

and indiscriminate violence, many poor Guatemalans concluded that there was “no other way out” and took up arms accordingly.<sup>26</sup> The result was, for many Guatemalans, the worst of both worlds: increasingly brutal state violence, and an increasingly powerful guerrilla insurgency. This crisis reached fever pitch during the government (1978-1982) of General Romeo Lucas García, who took power after an extremely fraudulent election.<sup>27</sup> Under Lucas, the military unleashed an unprecedented wave of violence. In the countryside, a “scorched-earth strategy” was initiated, in which entire villages were massacred, and “in the cities, assassinations, death squad killings, and disappearances...also became more common, marking a rapid downward spiral of capricious violence and death” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 49-50). Yet, as bad as this violence was, the true sin of the Lucas government, in the eyes of increasingly discontent junior officers, was its ineffectiveness. During Lucas’ time in office, Guatemala faced increasing international isolation (due to its poor human rights record), growing economic difficulties and a perception that corruption was spiraling out of control and impeding the effectiveness of the counterinsurgency effort.<sup>28</sup> All of this contributed to a sense among some military factions that, unless something drastic were done immediately, there was a serious risk of Guatemala experiencing a leftist revolution of the sort that had

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<sup>26</sup> As Trudeau (1993: 40-41) explains: “By 1980 or 1981, the military’s campaign of violence in the Mayan highlands had produced some ironic repercussions... Military repression of reformist efforts and community organization...led to widespread mobilization: to protect themselves from the landowners and the military, the Mayan communities began to organize for self-defense. One result of government violence in Indian regions, therefore, was the politicization of indigenous communities, which often led to their incorporation into the armed insurgency. Victimized by the military and lacking alternatives for economic self-improvement, Indians increasingly turned to armed opposition, swelling the ranks of the guerrilla movement. This process almost always occurred *after* government repression and attempts to eliminate successful programs of communal activism, not before. In this sense, the Army’s campaign was a cause of the insurgency, not a response to it; the insurgents were recruited because of military repression, not by ideological conviction. On the whole, native resistance was a creature of state repression, not its cause.” See also Schirmer (1998: 39, 41, 61-62).

<sup>27</sup> See Trudeau (1993: 39-40) and Garrard-Burnett (2010: 43).

<sup>28</sup> See Schirmer (1998: 18-20).

occurred in Nicaragua after the Sandinistas toppled the Somoza dictatorship in 1979.

Indeed, according to Schirmer (1998: 38), by 1981, some military officers in Guatemala were predicting that the country's guerrillas would take power within two to three years.

In March 1982, junior officers in Guatemala carried out a palace coup against President Lucas and installed a new governing junta. There is a clear parallel between the March 1982 coup in Guatemala and the October 1979 coup in El Salvador.<sup>29</sup> In both cases, the primary motive of the putschists was to prevent a guerrilla-led revolution by removing a military president whom they viewed as feckless and corrupt,<sup>30</sup> and in both cases, the coup also spelt the end of the old regime and set in motion an eventual transition to democracy. Thus, in 1984, elections for a constituent assembly were held in Guatemala, just as in El Salvador in 1982; and in 1985, competitive presidential and parliamentary elections were held in Guatemala, just as in El Salvador in 1984 and 1985. Yet, as will be discussed in the next section, the coups in Guatemala and El Salvador differed in crucial respects. While both were motivated by a desire to prevent a guerrilla-led revolution and inadvertently triggered an eventual transition to democracy, the particular *ways* that they sought to achieve this end were very different. In El Salvador, as explained in Chapters 6 and 7, a self-described “Revolutionary Governing Junta” came to power, which attempted to drain support from the guerrillas by carrying out deep structural reforms and appointing prominent leftist civilians to important governmental posts, including members of the Communist Party. In Guatemala, in contrast, the new junta fell under the control of General Efraín Ríos Montt, an ideologically ambiguous figure, who, for reasons discussed below, was not as threatening

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<sup>29</sup> For a similar observation, see Booth (2001: 32), Goodwin (2001: 195-197) and Stanley (2007).

<sup>30</sup> On the causes of the March 1982 coup in Guatemala, see Handy (1984: 182-183, 256-257), Trudeau (1993: 43-44, 47, 60) and Schirmer (1998: 18-20).

to Guatemalan elites as the junta in El Salvador, but whose government also did not serve as a viable platform for the construction of a conservative authoritarian successor party.

### Why No “Guatemalan ARENA”?

In this study, I argue that the primary determinant of success or failure among new conservative parties in Latin America is authoritarian inheritance. This factor, I argue, explains why the most successful new conservative parties were also authoritarian successor parties. Given the importance of authoritarian inheritance, and the many parallels between the political trajectories of Guatemala and El Salvador described in the previous section, an obvious question arises: why didn't a conservative authoritarian successor party form in Guatemala? In other words, why no “Guatemalan ARENA”? In this section, I argue that the absence of such a party in Guatemala can be explained by two of the antecedent conditions discussed in Chapter 2. First, because Ríos Montt was in no way a representative of the radical left, his short-lived government (1982-1983) posed much less of a threat to economic elites than the post-1979 junta in El Salvador. Second, although the Ríos Montt dictatorship did not pose a significant threat to elites, it also did not constitute a viable platform for the construction of a conservative authoritarian successor party, given Ríos Montt's mild reformism, fundamentalist evangelical Christianity and personal eccentricities. While it is true that Ríos Montt went on to form a relatively successful authoritarian successor party, the Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG), the party did not have an upper-class core constituency and was thus not a conservative party. In short, the Ríos Montt dictatorship was neither threatening enough to prompt elites to join forces with incumbents

of the pre-1982 regime to form a conservative authoritarian successor party, nor friendly enough to them to provide the basis for a conservative authoritarian successor party itself.

In order to understand why the Ríos Montt dictatorship did not represent a similar level of threat to elites as the Revolutionary Governing Junta in El Salvador, it is necessary to examine the main counterinsurgency strategies pursued by each post-coup government. In El Salvador, the 1979 putschists were motivated by a desire to prevent a guerrilla-led revolution, and they sought to realize this goal by preempting some of the main reforms advocated by the Salvadoran guerrillas (see Chapters 6 and 7). Thus, after taking power, the new authorities announced that they would carry out a “profound transformation of the economic, social, and political structures of the country,”<sup>31</sup> and they appointed prominent leftists as ministers, including members of the Communist Party.<sup>32</sup> While the coup also triggered a massive wave of violence by the military and allied paramilitary groups, this was not the official policy of the new junta, but instead was carried out clandestinely by “death squads.” Regardless, the Revolutionary Governing Junta’s promises to carry out far-reaching reforms, its radical language and its willingness to work closely with civilian leftists, all made it appear terrifying to Salvadoran elites. The coming to power of this left-leaning government prompted them to back “death squad” activities in the country, and later to support the formation of a conservative authoritarian successor party, ARENA.

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<sup>31</sup> See “Proclamation of the Armed Forces of El Salvador,” reproduced in Loveman and Davies (1997: 203-206).

<sup>32</sup> For more on the policies of the junta that took power in October 1979, see Chapters 6 and 7.

The Ríos Montt dictatorship in Guatemala was very different.<sup>33</sup> On 23 March 1982, junior officers overthrew President Lucas and installed a military triumvirate led by retired General Efraín Ríos Montt. In June, Ríos Montt carried out a second “mini-coup” (Anderson 1988: 55), dissolving the junta and making himself the sole head of government. Like the post-coup junta in El Salvador, Ríos Montt aimed to put an end to Guatemala’s guerrilla insurgency; unlike the Salvadoran junta, however, he sought a primarily military solution to the conflict. As Schirmer (1998: 35-63) explains, the Guatemalan putschists were not opposed to the extreme violence employed by the Lucas government, but they believed that it was necessary to apply it in a more focused and systematic manner. Under Lucas, counterinsurgency had consisted of “all-out 100 percent random slaughter” (Schirmer 1998: 62), with very little planning or strategy. Under Ríos Montt, violence would become “more methodical and less chaotic than Lucas García’s counterinsurgency, but...also more deadly” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 87). The guiding principle of this military campaign was described through the metaphor of a fish in water: the guerrillas were the fish, and the population—particularly the rural, indigenous population—was the water. To kill the fish, it was necessary to drain the water upon which it depended for its survival.<sup>34</sup>

During Ríos Montt’s seventeen months in power, a wave of violent repression was unleashed that was extraordinary even by the bloody standards of Guatemala. Estimates of the number killed under his government range from 25,000 at the low end to 87,000 at the

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<sup>33</sup> As Dunkerley (1988: 493) explains, the fact that the post-coup government in Guatemala would be different from the post-coup government in El Salvador was apparent from the beginning: “The [Guatemalan] junta’s initial manifesto sustained the belief that real change would be limited to the removal of the leaders of the high command and a cluster of scapegoats from the police. In the language of authoritarian populism that clearly distinguished it from the proclamation of the Salvadorean rebel officers of October 1979, the new regime promised to eradicate corruption, dynamize the counter-insurgency campaign, encourage free enterprise, reorganize public administration and restore constitutional government after an undetermined period.”

<sup>34</sup> See Anderson (1988: 56), Schirmer (1998: 45) and Sanford (2003: 154-155).

high end.<sup>35</sup> In a conflict that had been raging, in one form or another, since the early 1960s and which is estimated to have caused 200,000 deaths, Ríos Montt's government stood out as "the violent and bloody nadir" (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 3).<sup>36</sup> Hundreds of villages were demarcated by the military as "killing zones" (*matanzas*), and their entire populations were massacred.<sup>37</sup> The bulk of those killed or displaced were civilians of various Mayan ethnicities, leading some to describe these events as "the Mayan holocaust" (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 7). In May 2013, a Guatemalan court found Ríos Montt guilty of genocide, based on evidence that the military under his direction had intentionally sought to exterminate the Ixil ethnic group.<sup>38</sup> In addition, perhaps over a million people were displaced and sent into external (mostly to Mexico) or internal exile (either to remote areas or "model villages" created by the military), and hundreds of thousands were forced to participate in so-called Civil Defense Patrols (PACs), paramilitary groups that aided the military in the counterinsurgency.<sup>39</sup> All of this was highly effective: "By the end of 1983, drained of all rural and most of their urban

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<sup>35</sup> See Schirmer (1998: 44, 56) and Garrard-Burnett (2010: 6-7).

<sup>36</sup> The figure of 200,000 for the entire civil war is the result of the findings of two separate truth commissions that were convoked after the signing of peace accords in the 1990s. See Garrard-Burnett (2010: 6).

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of these "killing zones," see Schirmer (1998: 35-63).

<sup>38</sup> See Elisabeth Malkin, "Former Leader of Guatemala Is Guilty of Genocide Against Mayan Group," *The New York Times*, 10 May 10 2013. There is some disagreement among scholars about whether the actions of the military during this period meet the legal definition of "genocide." Sanford (2003: 155) argues in the affirmative, asserting that "the Guatemalan army committed genocide against the Maya with the intention to destroy the Maya in whole or in part." In contrast, Garrard-Burnett (2010: 16) is somewhat less sure, asserting that since "ethnic cleansing in this context was subordinate to the formal political discourse of anticommunism," it may not have legally qualified as genocide. Nevertheless, she writes: "The counterinsurgency campaign, underscored by profound class divisions, an ideology of racism, and essentialized stereotypes of indigenous cunning, was genocidal in its effects, if not in its ideological discourse. It was, then, a de facto war of genocide if not a de jure one. This difference between genocide, strictly defined, and genocide in effect may be an important legal distinction, but perhaps not a moral one" (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 18).

<sup>39</sup> On the number of displaced people, see Schirmer (1998: 56) and Garrard-Burnett (2010: 6). On the "model villages," see Schirmer (1998: 69-73) and Garrard-Burnett (2010: 72-74). On the Civil Defense Patrols (PACs), see Schirmer (1998: 81-102) and Garrard-Burnett (2010: 99-104).



strategic support, the fishes no longer had a sea in which to swim” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 89). The result was that, unlike El Salvador’s guerrillas, who remained a powerful fighting force until the 1990s, Guatemala’s guerrillas suffered “virtual annihilation” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 89) and a clear “strategic defeat” (Figueroa et al. 2007: 46) under Ríos Montt.<sup>40</sup>

The unambiguous hostility of Ríos Montt toward the country’s guerrillas and the extreme violence employed by his government to defeat them had important consequences for conservative politics in Guatemala. There was no doubt about where Ríos Montt stood on the issue of “subversion”; unlike in El Salvador, it was impossible to accuse him of being a secret communist in cahoots with the guerrillas, Cuba and the Soviet Union—an accusation repeatedly made by Salvadoran rightists against the post-1979 juntas. As a result, his government did not prompt economic elites to join forces with displaced incumbents of the pre-1982 regime in order to save the country from “communism,” as occurred in El Salvador with the partnership between elites and Roberto D’Aubuisson. Why would they? After all, Ríos Montt was taking the fight to the guerrillas in a far more brutal and effective way than had ever been done before. Yet, while Ríos Montt’s government was not a threat to Guatemalan elites like the post-1979 junta in El Salvador, it was also not a viable platform for the construction of a conservative authoritarian successor party. As will be discussed below, his government *was* popular and it *did* lead to the formation of a fairly successful non-conservative authoritarian successor party. However, for a number of reasons, Ríos Montt alienated the country’s elites, and, once the guerrillas had been liquidated, they were happy to be done with him. No one could accuse Ríos Montt of being a communist stooge, but he was not a close friend of Guatemalan elites either. If the “Goldilocks principle” requires

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<sup>40</sup> As a result, when the URNG finally signed peace accords with the Guatemalan state in 1996, this was more of a “negotiated surrender” than a true negotiated political settlement (Allison 2006: 138).

that something be neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, the Ríos Montt government was an instance of the “reverse Goldilocks principle.” It was neither overly threatening to elites nor particularly friendly towards them; it was, in other words, just wrong for the formation of a conservative authoritarian successor party.

There were two main reasons why Ríos Montt’s dictatorship alienated Guatemalan elites and thus did not constitute a viable platform for the construction of a conservative authoritarian successor party. The first was his evangelical Protestant faith. In 1977, Ríos Montt converted from Catholicism and became a member of a small fundamentalist church called *El Verbo* (the Word).<sup>41</sup> By all accounts, he became “a passionately, many would say fanatically, religious man” (Handy 1984: 270). After Ríos Montt became president, he did not keep this part of his life private; on the contrary, he made it a central feature of his administration, appointing members of his church as advisers and using the bully pulpit of the presidency to proselytize. According to Garrard-Burnett (2010: 68), “Ríos Montt described himself repeatedly as a divinely anointed leader: in his own words, ‘*Dios me puso aquí*’ (God put me here).”<sup>42</sup> In line with this self-understanding, Ríos Montt gave televised speeches on Sundays with “a Bible near at hand,” in which he would talk about a range of issues with “a religious or moral subtext, solidly embedded in an evangelical narrative framework” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 59). This public display of evangelical religiosity was thrilling to many of the country’s Protestants, who by the early 1980s constituted between

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<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of Ríos Montt’s religious conversion, see Garrard-Burnett (2010: 55-57).

<sup>42</sup> In May 1982, the U.S. ambassador privately commented that “[Ríos Montt] believes that he came to the presidency of the junta by the will of God and remains there as his personal emissary and victor and will be removed whenever God pleases it. He believes he has a divine mission not only with respect to corruption but bringing around a profound change in Guatemalan society” (quoted in Garrard-Burnett 2010: 153).

one-fifth and one-quarter of the population.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, however, it “embarrassed a bourgeoisie that preferred orthodox Catholicism to Protestantism and was prone to blench at messianic homilies” (Dunkerley 1988: 494).<sup>44</sup> In private, Ríos Montt was ridiculed by some as “the ayatollah”<sup>45</sup> or “Dios Montt” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 64), playing on the Spanish word for “God.” By August 1983, when he was overthrown in a coup, “Ríos Montt’s exotic messianism had alienated most sectors of the ruling class” (Trudeau 1993: 63).<sup>46</sup> This factor not only contributed to the coup against him,<sup>47</sup> but also helped to make his dictatorship an unviable platform for the construction of a conservative authoritarian successor party.

The second reason was Ríos Montt’s mild reformism. Although Ríos Montt was undoubtedly right-wing on the dimension of the left-right axis that Ostiguy (2009a: 12-13) calls “attitudes toward order and authority”—indeed, he was a right-wing extremist—he was not particularly right-wing on socioeconomic issues.<sup>48</sup> Ríos Montt’s reformist streak had

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<sup>43</sup> See Dunkerley (1988: 494) and Garrard-Burnett (2010: 56). On how the growth of Guatemala’s Protestant population has affected politics over the years, see Freston (2001: 263-280) and Samson (2008).

<sup>44</sup> According to Freston (2001: 266), only five percent of Guatemalan “elites” were Protestant in the early 1990s.

<sup>45</sup> See Mark Whitaker and Beth Nissen, “Beans-and-Bullets Politics,” *Newsweek*, 13 December 1982.

<sup>46</sup> The statements from members of his church were even more “exotic.” In September 1982, when a group of U.S. Pentecostals visiting Guatemala asked a *Verbo* pastor about human rights violations in the country, he responded: “The Army doesn’t massacre Indians. It massacres demons, and Indians are demons possessed; they are communists. We hold Brother Efraín Ríos Montt like King David of the Old Testament. He is the king of the New Testament” (quoted in Garrard-Burnett 2010: 162).

<sup>47</sup> On 8 August 1983, Ríos Montt was overthrown in a coup by his defense minister, General Óscar Humberto Mejía Víctores. As Garrard-Burnett (2010: 80-81) discusses, Ríos Montt’s faith was cited as a central motive for the coup: “The public rhetoric of the August 8 coup addressed the religious issue head on, leaving the clear implication that Ríos Montt was...a religious zealot. The Mejía government issued a statement to the press on the day of the coup that called Ríos Montt and his advisors from the Church of the Word part of ‘a fanatical and aggressive religious group which took advantage of their position of power as the highest members of government for their benefit, ignoring the fundamental principle of the separation of Church and State.’”

<sup>48</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, Ostiguy (2009a) offers an ideological definition of “right” and “left” that is composed of two distinct dimensions: attitudes toward order and authority, and the socioeconomic dimension.

been evident since at least 1974,<sup>49</sup> when he ran as the candidate of the National Opposition Front (FNO) coalition, which was composed of the Christian Democrats<sup>50</sup> and several small social democratic parties, in that year's presidential election.<sup>51</sup> His running mate, Alberto Fuentes Mohr, was at the time the "bête noir of the right" (Dunkerley 1988: 459), and would later go on to found the Social Democratic Party. In this election, "Ríos Montt was not...the candidate of the Far Right" (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 43), and was robbed of victory by the military authorities through blatantly fraudulent means.<sup>52</sup> Given this background, it is not surprising that after taking power in 1982, Ríos Montt did not pursue an ideologically pure right-wing socioeconomic agenda. In fact, he quickly butted heads with economic elites and the private sector over two major issues. The first was a proposal for a "special war tax" (Dunkerley 1988: 497) to fund his ramped-up assault on the country's guerrillas,<sup>53</sup>

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According to Ostiguy (2009a: 14-15), these two dimensions are "oblique," in the sense that they are theoretically distinct but tend, empirically, to hang together. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that because they are "not theoretically reducible to one another," they "could even form the basis of four political quadrants" (Ostiguy 2009a: 14). Ríos Montt is a rare example of a politician for whom these two obliquely related dimensions did not coincide. He was clearly a rightist on the dimension of law and order, but not on socioeconomic issues.

<sup>49</sup> It may have been evident even earlier. According to *The New York Times*, Ríos Montt, who had previously been the army chief of staff, "was exiled to a diplomatic post in Washington last summer because of his supposed liberal tendencies." See Alan Riding, "Army Holds Key to Guatemalan Election," *The New York Times*, 2 March 1974. Since this was written for a U.S. audience, "liberal" can be taken to mean "progressive."

<sup>50</sup> At the time of the 1994 election, Ríos Montt was still a Catholic in good standing. Not only was he himself a Catholic, but his brother, Mario Enrique Ríos Montt, was a bishop (Anderson 1988: 53-54).

<sup>51</sup> The National Opposition Front (FNO) was composed of the Christian Democrats (DCG); the social democratic United Revolutionary Front (FUR); the left wing of the more traditional Revolutionary Party (PR); and the Revolutionary Democratic Unity Party, a "center-left reform part[y]" (Handy 1984: 154, 170). There is a clear parallel between Guatemala's FNO and El Salvador's National Opposition Union (UNO), which, as discussed in Chapter 6, was the opposition coalition comprised of Christian Democrats and social democrats that supported the candidacy of José Napoleón Duarte in that country's 1972 presidential election. Not only did the FNO and UNO have nearly identical names and partisan compositions, but the candidates of both coalitions lost in presidential elections that were widely considered to have been fraudulent.

<sup>52</sup> According to Anderson (1988: 28), the 1974 election was a "blatant farce." For more on the fraud used in the 1974 election, see Handy (1984: 171), Dunkerley (1988: 461) and Garrard-Burnett (2010: 43).

<sup>53</sup> For a discussion of the successful implementation of this kind of war tax in the more recent context of the government of Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) in Colombia, see Flores-Macías (2013b).

which “antagonized a bourgeoisie for which any increase in taxes was heretical” (Dunkerley 1988: 498). Ríos Montt responded by criticizing “private business for excessive greed and irresponsibility,” and accused them of “earn[ing] usurious profits, evad[ing] taxes, and export[ing] capital illegally with no regard for domestic consequences” (Garrard-Burnett 1998: 143).<sup>54</sup> The second, and perhaps even more fateful, point of contention was land reform. Although relations between landowners and Ríos Montt had initially been good, these soured after rumors began to circulate about plans to distribute land confiscated from incumbents of the old regime, and possibly even to carry out larger-scale expropriations.<sup>55</sup> Landowners’ concerns “reached hysteric proportions when a report was leaked indicating that the U.S. State Department was drawing up a tentative agrarian reform for Guatemala” (Handy 1984: 269). This was a second reason why Ríos Montt alienated elites, and why, once the guerrillas had largely been defeated, they were happy to see him go.<sup>56</sup>

Although Ríos Montt’s religion and mild reformism meant that his dictatorship was not a viable platform for the construction of a conservative authoritarian successor party, these qualities did *not* impede the formation of an authoritarian successor party of non-conservative extraction. In 1989, Ríos Montt formed the Guatemalan Republican Front

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<sup>54</sup> Ríos Montt’s clash with Guatemala’s private sector is well-documented. See, for example, Handy (1984: 267-271), Dunkerley (1988: 497-498), McCleary (1997: 51-55, 130) and Garrard-Burnett (1998: 143).

<sup>55</sup> For a discussion of these rumors, see Handy (1984: 269-270). According to McCleary (1999: 54-55), these rumors were accurate: “The Ríos Montt regime’s land reform plan was taken directly from the USAID study... The agrarian reform plan targeted the south coast of Guatemala, which has large sugar and cotton farms as well as cattle ranches. Considering itself above the law, the regime of Ríos Montt began to impose its vision of redistribution of property rights by threatening expropriation of land.”

<sup>56</sup> *The New York Times* summarized the causes of the 1983 overthrow of Ríos Montt as follows: “President Efraín Ríos Montt’s downfall was not unexpected. Erratic and outspoken, a combative Fundamentalist Protestant in a Roman Catholic country, he never gained the trust of the small group of wealthy landowners, reactionary army officers and conservative politicians who really run the nation.” See Arthur C. Schlesinger, “Guatemala’s Coup II,” *The New York Times*, 11 August 1983.

(FRG), which would become one of the country's most important parties in the 1990s and 2000s.<sup>57</sup> A clear case of an authoritarian successor party, the FRG openly campaigned on nostalgia for Ríos Montt's dictatorship.<sup>58</sup> In doing so, it was able to draw on at least two forms of authoritarian inheritance: brand and territorial organization. In terms of brand, the FRG benefited from the fact that its personalistic leader enjoyed substantial support among the electorate. Despite the extraordinary violence of his dictatorship—or perhaps because of it—Ríos Montt had acquired the status of a “popular hero” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 9). Much of this was due to his association with law and order, and to memories of his time in power as a kind of “*pax riosmonttista*” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 81).<sup>59</sup> In the 1990 presidential election, this allowed Ríos Montt to run as the “candidate of law and order” (Jonas 1995: 31),

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<sup>57</sup> The FRG enjoyed considerable success in a number of legislative elections before fizzling out. In 1990, it won 11.9 percent as part of the “No Sell-Out” coalition; in 1995, it won 20.0 percent; in 1999, it won 42.1 percent; in 2003, it won 19.7 percent; in 2007, it won 9.8 percent; and in 2011, it won 2.7 percent. See Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas. While Ríos Montt was barred from running for president in the 1990s (see below), he was elected to Congress in the 1994 special election and became President of Congress at various points in the 1990s and 2000s. This status gave him parliamentary immunity and thus shielded him from legal prosecution for human rights violations carried out during his 1982-1983 dictatorship. See ASIES (2012: 45-55).

<sup>58</sup> For example, the FRG used as its party symbol a blue and white hand holding up its thumb, index finger and middle finger. This three-fingered hand was the main symbol of the Ríos Montt dictatorship, and was meant to represent the government's pledge not to “rob,” “lie” or “abuse.” The symbol became ubiquitous during Ríos Montt's dictatorship, and would later become similarly omnipresent in FRG electoral propaganda. For a description, see Garrard-Burnett (2010: 61). Similarly, the FRG made explicit references to the Ríos Montt dictatorship while campaigning. As Trudeau (1993: 145) recounts in his description of the 1990 presidential election: “The Ríos campaign stressed the need to take tough action in response to crime and corruption, themes echoing his style of government in 1982 and 1983. On civilian rule, for example, his position was that civilians had allowed the country to be dirtied again: ‘We eliminated the garbage once and we can do it again.’”

<sup>59</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that many urban Guatemalans remembered Ríos Montt's dictatorship as a time of relative order and security. According to Handy (1984: 266), the frequency of “death squad” killings in cities fell after Ríos Montt took power; thus, while state violence in rural areas reached unprecedented heights, “violent incidents in Guatemala City during the early months of the new administration fell by over 90 percent.” Far more puzzling is the support that Ríos Montt and the FRG enjoyed in the very areas most terrorized by state violence during his dictatorship. As Garrard-Burnett (2010: 10) explains: “In the 1995 election, the Frente Republicano Guatemalteco [FRG]...claimed a majority of votes in nearly every single department where the violence during his administration had been worst... In the 1999 race, just before the elections, polls showed that Ríos Montt, still not a legal candidate for office, enjoyed the support of at least 50 percent of the voters in the zones of conflict where presumably among his supporters were both witnesses to and even survivors of the massacres that had taken place under his administration” (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 10). The subject of the FRG's success in such areas has not been well-studied. For partial exceptions, see Copeland (2007, 2011).

and he probably would have won had his candidacy not been barred based on his status as a former putschist.<sup>60</sup> In terms of territorial organization, the FRG inherited the loyalty of many members of the Civil Defense Patrols (PACs), the rural paramilitary groups created during the Ríos Montt dictatorship to aid in counterinsurgency efforts.<sup>61</sup> By the time he was overthrown in 1983, these had approximately 700,000 members, a whopping 10 percent of the country's entire population (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 101). Yet, while the FRG was an authoritarian successor party and benefited from authoritarian inheritance, it was not a conservative party. Indeed, far from being a vehicle for the country's upper strata, the FRG espoused a "strident anti-oligarchic discourse" (Sánchez 2009: 119) and had a "virulently adversarial relationship with the private sector" (Sánchez 2008: 137).<sup>62</sup> After the FRG's candidate, Alfonso Portillo,<sup>63</sup> became president in 2000, "[n]either the FRG nor Portillo's

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<sup>60</sup> In the lead-up to the 1990 presidential election, polls showed Ríos Montt with a significant lead over potential rivals (Trudeau 1993: 146; Garrard-Burnett 2010: 10). However, he was barred from running because of a stipulation in the 1985 constitution that made ineligible any presidential candidate who had previously taken power through a coup d'état. According to Garrard-Burnett (2010: 10), this was "a stipulation that the 1984-1985 Constitutional Assembly [had] drafted with Ríos Montt specifically in mind." Ríos Montt attempted to challenge this rule by claiming that it violated his human rights, but this argument was rejected by Guatemala's highest courts (Trudeau 1993: 145). With Ríos Montt out of the race, space was created for a former associate, Jorge Serrano Elías, to run as a personalistic outsider. Serrano was a fellow evangelical, and had served as the president of a body called the Council of State during the Ríos Montt dictatorship. Polls indicated that if Ríos Montt did not run, his supporters would back Serrano instead (Trudeau 1993: 145). Serrano went on to win the 1990 election "on Ríos Montt's coattails" (Garrard-Burnett 2010: 206, fn. 106).

<sup>61</sup> See Amnesty International, "Guatemala: The Civil Defence Patrols Re-Emerge," 3 September 2002. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR34/053/2002/en/7578acaf-d7e8-11dd-9df8-236c90684588/amr340532002en.pdf>. Accessed on 20 April 2014. See also Figueroa et al. (2007: 55) and Sánchez (2008: 134).

<sup>62</sup> As one reporter recounted: "Mr. Portillo, who says his party is 'the party of the poor,' has accused the business class, which largely supports Mr. Arzu [*sic*], of taking advantage of the common people." See Larry Rohter, "Guatemala Election Becomes Vote on Former Dictator," *The New York Times*, 7 January 1996.

<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, Portillo made it clear that he represented Ríos Montt and would give him an important role in his government. As one reporter recounted: "Since being handed his party's nomination, Mr. Portillo has given the impression that his would be some sort of co-presidency with General Rios Montt. Almost all Republican Front [FRG] posters, leaflets and ads feature both men, who frequently campaign together, and Front supporters have been given T-shirts that read, 'Portillo to the presidency, Rios Montt to power.'" See Larry Rohter, "Guatemala Election Becomes Vote on Former Dictator," *The New York Times*, 7 January 1996.

government team include[d] members of the traditional oligarchy or executives of the business elite.”<sup>64</sup> In fact, Portillo declared “war with the economic *crème de la crème*,”<sup>65</sup> and “repeated time and again that ‘this country is no longer their plantation,’ referring to the oligarchy that has traditionally held power.”<sup>66</sup> Moreover, “[f]or the first time, the CACIF [Coordinating Committee of the Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations, the country’s peak business association] was facing a government with which it did not enjoy traditional sources of leverage and linkage” (Sánchez 2009: 119). In short, Ríos Montt’s dictatorship gave rise to a fairly successful authoritarian successor party, but *not* a conservative party.

To summarize, in this section I have argued that the main reason that no conservative authoritarian successor party emerged in Guatemala was the nature of the Ríos Montt dictatorship (1982-1983). Unlike the left-leaning junta that came to power in El Salvador after the October 1979 coup, the Ríos Montt government did not pose a serious threat to Guatemalan elites. As a result, the defensive union of displaced incumbents of the old regime and economic elites that in El Salvador led to the formation of ARENA, did not occur in Guatemala. Yet, while Ríos Montt did not represent an existential threat to Guatemalan elites, his evangelical Protestantism and mild reformism did not allow for a close relationship with them either. As discussed above, these qualities did not impede the construction of an authoritarian successor party on the basis of Ríos Montt’s dictatorship, as

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<sup>64</sup> See Juan Hernández Pico, “Guatemala: Portillo Lives on Appearances While Covering up Reality,” *Revista Envío*. No. 246. January 2002. <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/1554>. Accessed on 20 April 2014.

<sup>65</sup> See Juan Hernández Pico, “Guatemala: Portillo Lives on Appearances While Covering up Reality,” *Revista Envío*. No. 246. January 2002. <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/1554>. Accessed on 20 April 2014.

<sup>66</sup> See Juan Hernández Pico, “Guatemala: Will Anyone Register the General?,” *Revista Envío*. No. 265. August 2003. <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/2110>. Accessed on 11 May 2014.



evidenced by the emergence of the FRG; however, they *did* impede the formation of a *conservative* authoritarian successor party.<sup>67</sup> As a result, when elites turned to the task of forming a party to represent them in Guatemala's newly competitive political system, they would not be able to draw on authoritarian inheritance, but instead would have to fend for themselves. The result was the PAN, a conservative party with far better democratic credentials than El Salvador's ARENA but, paradoxically, worse democratic prospects.

### The Rise of the PAN

In the mid-1980s, Guatemala made the transition to competitive elections and civilian rule.<sup>68</sup> As in El Salvador after the 1979 coup, this transition was triggered, indirectly, by the 1982 coup that brought Ríos Montt to power. While Ríos Montt's original intention seems to have been to remain in power for several years,<sup>69</sup> he responded to opposition from various sectors by announcing plans to hold elections for a constituent assembly in 1984.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> In theory, a conservative authoritarian successor party might have coexisted with the FRG. It seems, however, that in light of Ríos Montt's popularity, at least some former authoritarian incumbents opted to work with him rather than against him. In the 1990 election, for example, the Institutional Democratic Party (PID), the now-marginal former "official" party of the old regime, entered into a coalition with the FRG called the "No Sell-Out Platform" (*Plataforma No-Venta*). See Ameringer (1992) and Coggins and Lewis (1992).

<sup>68</sup> Although elections became relatively free and fair in Guatemala beginning in 1985, the military continued to exercise a high degree of control over the country's politics. This was particularly clear during the Christian Democratic [DCG] government (1986-1991) of Vinicio Cerezo, the first civilian government in decades. As Millett (1992: 67) explains: "Although DCG candidate Vinicio Cerezo was allowed to win the 1985 elections and take office as president, he was still subject to numerous restrictions on his power by the military. By his own estimate, he entered office with 30 percent of the power, a figure he hoped to increase to 70 percent by 1989. He made it clear that he would not interfere in internal military affairs and that the defense minister would be selected by the military. In addition, he accepted amnesty for officers whose actions were decreed by the military government shortly before it left power." As such, it is perhaps more accurate to describe Guatemala in the late 1980s and much of the 1990s as a "hybrid regime" (Karl 1995) rather than a democracy.

<sup>69</sup> According to McCleary (1999: 52-53), Ríos Montt "informed the military hierarchy and private sector that he would remain in power for seven years total."

<sup>70</sup> See Anderson (1988: 56) and Dunkerley (1988: 497-498).

In August 1983, he was overthrown in a coup by his defense minister, General Óscar Humberto Mejía Víctores, and was thus unable to carry out this promise. Mejía Víctores, however, decided to honor the pledge to hold elections, and the “[electoral] calendar inherited from Ríos Montt remained intact” (Trudeau 1993: 65). His decision seems to have been made at least partially in the hope of receiving assistance from the United States, which had suspended military aid to Guatemala in 1977.<sup>71</sup> The July 1984 constituent assembly election, and the November 1985 general election that followed, were the most democratic the country had seen since the Ten Years of Spring: “[t]here were no military candidates,” “several political parties participated” and the elections themselves “were characterized by procedural honesty” (Trudeau 1993: 73). As in El Salvador in the first half of the 1980s, the initial beneficiary of this transition to competitive elections was the country’s Christian Democratic (DCG) party. Like the Christian Democrats in El Salvador, the DCG had long acted as a reformist, semi-tolerated opposition to the official candidates of the military regime.<sup>72</sup> This past helped the party to sweep the 1984 and 1985 elections: it won a plurality of votes in the 1984 constituent assembly election and the 1985 legislative election, and its candidate, Vinicio Cerezo, was elected by a large margin in the 1985 presidential election (Trudeau 1993: 69-71). Like in El Salvador, however, the DCG entered into rapid decline in the early 1990s, and was relegated to marginal status by the end of the decade.<sup>73</sup>

It was in this context of partial transition to democracy that the National Advancement Party (PAN) was born in the 1980s. In the lead-up to the 1985 general

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<sup>71</sup> On the suspension of U.S. military aid, see LeoGrande (2000: 17, 38) and McCleary (1999: 43). On the hope that elections would help to bring about a resumption of U.S. aid, see Trudeau (1993: 64-65).

<sup>72</sup> On the parallels between the Guatemalan and Salvadoran Christian Democrats, see Williams and Seri (2003).

<sup>73</sup> See Williams and Seri (2003: 321-323).

election, Álvaro Arzú, a successful businessman from a prominent family, decided to create a “civic committee” to contest the election for mayor of Guatemala City. At the time, Guatemalan law distinguished between two types of electoral vehicle: parties, which were necessary to run for national office, and “civic committees,” which could be used to run at the municipal level but not nationally. Registering a party implied some effort, since the law required that applicants demonstrate an organizational presence in the majority of the country’s departments; in contrast, forming a civic committee was very easy.<sup>74</sup> In its early years, then, the PAN was technically not a party; it was the *Comité Cívico Plan de Avanzada Nacional*, or National Advancement Plan Civic Committee. Yet, this was largely a juridical fiction, and from the beginning the PAN aimed to become a national party. Even the name for the civic committee was chosen to allow it to become a party without losing name recognition, since National Advancement *Plan* could be changed to National Advancement *Party* without altering the acronym “PAN.”<sup>75</sup> In 1989, the PAN obtained legal status as a party, and contested office nationally for the first time in the 1990 general election.

PAN founders sought to fill what they considered a void in the Guatemalan party system by creating a party of the “liberal right” (Ajenjo and García 2001: 335). While there was a long tradition of right-wing parties in Guatemala, these had been characterized either by violent anti-communism, as in the case of the National Liberation Movement (MLN), or been dominated by the military, as in the case of the Institutional Democratic Party (PID) (see above). These existing options were unattractive to PAN founders, not only because they had fallen into disrepair after the 1982 coup, but also because these parties had a

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<sup>74</sup> See Trudeau (1993: 61) and Ajenjo and García (2001: 279-283).

<sup>75</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 24 January 2014.

fundamentally different political outlook from their own. As the CIDOB explains in its profile of Arzú: “The National Advancement Party (PAN) sought to fill a gap in the political panorama already dominated by conservative parties, presenting itself as a force of the moderate and responsible right, capable of integrating into its discourse pressing issues of the moment such as the defense of human rights and the consolidation of democratic institutions, but without renouncing the traditional postulates of fatherland, law and order.”<sup>76</sup>

In general terms, this put the PAN on the “center-right” of the ideological spectrum.<sup>77</sup> As such, the party was committed to “the defense of private property, the self-regulating market, opposition to state intervention...and the defense of the family as the fundamental means of social development” (Ajenjo and García 2001: 335). In recognition of this ideological self-positioning, the PAN became a member of the Union of Latin American Parties (UPLA), a regional club for right-leaning parties, to which El Salvador’s ARENA, Chile’s UDI and Argentina’s UCEDE also belonged (ASIES 2004: 35-36). Yet, while the PAN was clearly part of Latin America’s “new right,”<sup>78</sup> it was less ideological than the other parties examined in this study. It had neither the intense commitment to free-market liberalism of the UCEDE, nor the religious conservatism of the UDI, nor the strident anti-communism of ARENA. On the contrary, under Arzú’s leadership, the PAN constantly emphasized its pragmatic nature, “identif[ying] itself as a party of technocrats concerned with efficiency and good government, rather than ideology and posturing” (Trudeau 1992: 343). Even when arguing in favor of right-of-center economic policies, it did

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<sup>76</sup> CIDOB, “Álvaro Arzú Yrigoyen,” hereafter referred to as CIDOB, “Arzú.” [http://www.cidob.org/es/documentacio/biografias\\_lideres\\_politicos/america\\_central\\_y\\_caribe/guatemala/alvaro\\_arzu\\_yrigoyen](http://www.cidob.org/es/documentacio/biografias_lideres_politicos/america_central_y_caribe/guatemala/alvaro_arzu_yrigoyen). Accessed on 27 April 2014.

<sup>77</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014. See also McCleary (1997: 132).

<sup>78</sup> See Gálvez (1996).

so on the basis of the practical effects that such policies would supposedly deliver rather than on abstract principles.<sup>79</sup> One PAN leader approvingly paraphrased Arzú's position as being, "all of that stuff about ideology is nonsense... We're pragmatic."<sup>80</sup>

In addition to being a party of the right—albeit one with a strongly pragmatic streak—the PAN was a conservative party, in Gibson's (1996) sociological sense.<sup>81</sup> Unlike the FRG, which was right-wing (at least on the dimension of attitudes toward order and authority) but did not enjoy the backing of elites, the PAN drew its core constituency from the upper strata of Guatemalan society. The party's nature as a conservative party was evident in several respects. Its founder, Álvaro Arzú, was a blond-haired member of the country's small European-descended elite.<sup>82</sup> He came from a wealthy and prominent family, and was himself a successful businessman, particularly in the tourism industry.<sup>83</sup> He was, in other words, "a member of Guatemala's traditional oligarchy" (Sánchez 2009: 116). The same was also true of the PAN's second-most important leader, Óscar Berger, a wealthy businessman from "a family of the high bourgeoisie of the coffee and sugar industries."<sup>84</sup>

Like any conservative party that enjoys a degree of success, the PAN won votes from a

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<sup>79</sup> In his coverage of the 1995-1996 presidential election, for example, one journalist reported: "During his campaign, Mr. Arzu [*sic*] argued that the only way to end widespread and entrenched poverty in Guatemala is to produce and export more." See Larry Rohter, "Guatemalan Who Pledges to 'Avoid Excesses' Is Narrowly Elected as President," *The New York Times*, 9 January 1996.

<sup>80</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014.

<sup>81</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between ideological definitions of the right and Gibson's (1996) sociological definition of conservative parties, see Chapter 1.

<sup>82</sup> See Larry Rohter, "Guatemalan Who Pledges to 'Avoid Excesses' Is Narrowly Elected as President," *The New York Times*, 9 January 1996. See also CIDOB, "Arzú."

<sup>83</sup> Author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014, and with another former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014. See also Ajenjo and García (2001: 333).

<sup>84</sup> CIDOB, Óscar Berger Perdomo, hereafter referred to as CIDOB, "Berger." [http://www.cidob.org/en/documentacio/biografias\\_lideres\\_politicos/america\\_central\\_y\\_caribe/guatemala/oscar\\_berger\\_perdomo](http://www.cidob.org/en/documentacio/biografias_lideres_politicos/america_central_y_caribe/guatemala/oscar_berger_perdomo). Accessed on 27 April 2014.

cross-section of society, particularly in urban areas. Nevertheless, both observers and PAN leaders agree that the party's strongest support came from elites. One former PAN leader, for example, explains that the party emerged out of Zones 10 and 14 of Guatemala City, "the zones of the people with money, a small group."<sup>85</sup> These people could not contribute many votes, but "they put up the money."<sup>86</sup> He continues: "The base of the PAN and the leadership had nothing in common, nothing... The leadership were the well-heeled, those with money, the elites of the country... Both the elites of the capital city and the elites at the departmental level... The rich were with us. And they paid for everything."<sup>87</sup> This internal assessment was shared by outside observers.<sup>88</sup> One Guatemalan think tank, for example, found that the "hard vote" of the PAN came from "middle- and upper-class sectors" (ASIES 2004: 36). Similarly, McCleary (1997: 134) writes that in the 1990 presidential election, elites supported [PAN founder Álvaro Arzú's] candidacy," and Trudeau (1992: 343-344) claims that the party was "connected to agro-exporters."<sup>89</sup> This was also how the PAN was perceived in popular opinion and portrayed by other parties. One poll in December 1999, for example, asked respondents for whom they thought "the rich" would vote in that year's presidential election; 68 percent answered that they believed the rich would vote for the PAN candidate, Óscar Berger.<sup>90</sup> Other parties, particularly Ríos Montt's FRG, relentlessly attacked the PAN for being "the party of the rich" (ASIES 2004: 36).

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<sup>85</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>86</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>87</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, Booth (2001: 32).

<sup>89</sup> See also ASIES (2004: 36); Ajenjo and García (2001: 333, 335); and CIDOB profiles of Arzú and Berger.

<sup>90</sup> See "Discurso populista dividió voto nacional," *La Prensa Libre*, 22 December 1999.

Yet, while the PAN was a conservative party, it differed from parties such as El Salvador's ARENA in a fundamental respect: it was *not* an authoritarian successor party. As described above, the PAN was founded by Álvaro Arzú in 1985 to support his mayoral candidacy. Arzú's democratic credentials were not completely pristine. He had been the director of the Guatemalan Tourism Institute (INGUAT) from 1978 to 1981 during the military government of General Romeo Lucas García, and he had been a member of the MLN, the party created by former dictator Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas that had at times served as part of the military's support coalition.<sup>91</sup> In no way, though, did Arzú's work in INGUAT make him an important player in the military regime along the lines of Chile's Jaime Guzmán or El Salvador's Roberto D'Aubuisson. With respect to his membership in the MLN, he had belonged to the "professional branch" of the party, which in 1978 split off to create the more moderate National Renewal Party (PNR).<sup>92</sup> In the March 1982 general election, Arzú made his first bid for mayor of Guatemala City as the PNR candidate, in coalition with the Christian Democrats. He won the election, but was unable to assume office because of the coup that occurred two weeks later. Ríos Montt offered to appoint him mayor anyway, but he refused,<sup>93</sup> reportedly asserting that he would not accept a position through military appointment for which he had been elected.<sup>94</sup> As one PAN founder explains, this gave him "political credit, not only for having won the election, but also for

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<sup>91</sup> See ASIES (2004: 25-26, fn. 17). Also author's interviews.

<sup>92</sup> See Trudeau (1992: 344; 1993: 45). According to a close collaborator, Arzú (and other members of the "professional branch") split off from the MLN because he did not share its authoritarian propensities or identify with its "extreme right" views (author's interview with former national PAN leader, 31 January 2014).

<sup>93</sup> See ASIES (2004: 25-26) and CIDOB, "Arzú."

<sup>94</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

having declined to be named mayor by the military government [of Ríos Montt].”<sup>95</sup> Years later, while campaigning against the FRG candidate, Alfonso Portillo, in the 1995-1996 presidential election, Arzú brandished his democratic credentials and warned that an FRG government would mean “a return to the past, with all of its burden of pain, bloodshed and death.”<sup>96</sup> When Arzú won, *The New York Times* printed an editorial with the headline “A Democrat Wins in Guatemala.”<sup>97</sup> In short, while Arzú was not entirely free of links to past military governments, his democratic credentials were as good as—and probably better than—virtually anyone on the right in Guatemala at the time. The same was true of Óscar Berger<sup>98</sup> and other PAN founders, who were mostly businesspeople and successful professionals who had had little or no involvement in past military governments.<sup>99</sup>

The nearly simultaneous emergence of the PAN, a conservative party that was not an authoritarian successor party, and of the FRG, an authoritarian successor party that was not a conservative party, meant that party politics on “the right” during the Guatemalan transition to democracy was more muddled than in El Salvador during the same period. In El Salvador, ARENA was based on a coalition of economic elites and elements of the previous military regime. In Guatemala, that coalition was split: the PAN became the vehicle for elites, and the FRG became the vehicle for those with ties to, or sympathy for,

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<sup>95</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Larry Rohter, “Guatemala Election Becomes Vote on Former Dictator,” *The New York Times*, 7 January 1996. In the 1999 general election, the PAN continued this line of attack against the FRG. See Juan Hernández Pico, “Guatemala: Seeking New Ground in the General’s Shadow,” *Revista Envío*. No. 218. September 1999. <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/2303>. Accessed on 9 May 2014.

<sup>97</sup> See “A Democratic Wins in Guatemala,” *The New York Times*, 12 January 1996.

<sup>98</sup> See CIDOB, “Berger.”

<sup>99</sup> See Trudeau (1993: 147) and Ajenjo and García (2001: 332).



past military governments. In one of the few scholarly comparisons of conservative parties in the two countries, Stanley (2007: 132-133) summarized this difference:

In contrast to El Salvador, there was comparatively little conservative party building [in Guatemala]. The political Right remained deeply divided over economic policies, how open the economy should be, the role of the state, and the role of the armed forces. The PAN and the FRG both competed for votes from traditional conservative constituencies... The most reactionary, pro-military elements supported the FRG... Relative to the FRG, the PAN positioned itself as representative of the modernized, pro-neoliberal sectors of the business community.

One former PAN leader summarized the division between the two parties by saying that the PAN represented the “business center-right” and the FRG represented the “military center-right.”<sup>100</sup> Another described the two parties as representing “different cultures,” given the FRG’s association with the military and the PAN’s distance from it.<sup>101</sup> *The Economist* had a similar assessment, writing in a 1999 article: “Both parties are right-wing. But the PAN is old money; the FRG is nouveau-riche. The PAN is cosy with the urban business types, the FRG with the army.”<sup>102</sup> This division of “the right” into two parties had significant implications for the PAN’s party-building strategy. First, it meant that the party would have to compete with the FRG for the support of right-leaning voters.<sup>103</sup> Second, it meant that in its quest for votes, it would not have access to authoritarian inheritance.

Because the PAN did not have access to authoritarian inheritance, it was born in a much weaker position than parties such as ARENA. As discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, ARENA benefited from multiple forms of authoritarian inheritance. First, it inherited the brand of “*D’Aubuissonismo*,” which emphasized the mix of militarism and anti-communism

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<sup>100</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>101</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014.

<sup>102</sup> See “Guatemala’s Democracy of Chickens, Rabbits—and Locals,” *The Economist*, 14 October 1999.

<sup>103</sup> See Stanley (2007: 132-133) and Williams and Seri (2003: 325).

long championed by the old regime. Voters everywhere in El Salvador knew what ARENA stood for, and many of them found it appealing. The PAN, in contrast, was an unknown quantity to most Guatemalans. While Arzú was well-known in Guatemala City because of his 1982 mayoral bid, he was virtually unknown in the rest of the country. Second, ARENA inherited a territorial organization in the form of the Nationalist Democratic Organization (ORDEN), a vast paramilitary structure created by the military authorities. The PAN, in contrast, had virtually no territorial organization outside of Guatemala City. The clearest evidence of its territorial weakness was the simple fact that, for the first four years of its existence, the PAN could not obtain legal status as a party (see above). The main stumbling block was the requirement that new parties have an organizational presence in at least 12 of the country's 22 departments.<sup>104</sup> This meant demonstrating that the would-be party had 15 members or more in at least 3 municipalities of the departments in question. As Ajenjo and García (2001: 280) note: "The requirements for the formation of parties [were] not excessively strict." In fact, the law had been introduced by Ríos Montt with the express purpose of undermining existing parties by making party registration easy and thus flooding the party system with new entrants.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, the PAN was initially so organizationally weak that it could not meet even this simple requirement. Third, ARENA benefited from the strong backing of the business community, both because D'Aubuisson was a trustworthy figure from the old regime and because, after ARENA's strong performance in its debut election in 1982, it proved to business that it was worth betting on.

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<sup>104</sup> For a discussion of Guatemalan electoral law, see Ajenjo and García (2001: 282).

<sup>105</sup> See Handy (1984: 272) and Trudeau (1993: 61).

The support of business for the PAN, in contrast, was lukewarm and not exclusive.

Business continued to bet on other parties, and it was never as fully committed to the PAN as in the case of ARENA. Finally, while ARENA members were bound together by a strong sense of *mística* and camaraderie forged in a history of joint struggle, the PAN lacked a comparable source of cohesion. Indeed, there was little holding the party together. This absence of a source of cohesion would eventually play a major role in the PAN's collapse.

Although it was born in a much weaker position than ARENA, the PAN managed to overcome some of its most immediate problems enough to enjoy significant electoral success in the short term. In terms of brand, Arzú's period as mayor (1986-1990) of Guatemala City helped the PAN to establish a reputation for administrative competence.<sup>106</sup> As one PAN founder explains, the perception that Arzú had been an excellent mayor was a good "letter of introduction" for voters on the national level.<sup>107</sup> In the words of another party founder, the idea behind the PAN's early campaigns was: "If this gentleman is enacting such positive changes as mayor, we want this for the country."<sup>108</sup> Even so, the PAN found it difficult to project itself beyond the capital city, its birthplace and electoral stronghold.<sup>109</sup> In terms of business support, the PAN fared somewhat better. According to multiple PAN leaders and outside observers, the party enjoyed considerable business support during the

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<sup>106</sup> See Gálvez (1996: 5). As discussed below, Arzú returned to the mayorship of Guatemala City in the 2000s. In 2005, in recognition of his accomplishments during his multiple administrations as mayor, the City Mayors Foundation, an international philanthropic association, honored Arzú with third place in its bi-annual "World Mayor" ranking. See <http://www.worldmayor.com/index.html>. Accessed on 29 April 2014.

<sup>107</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

<sup>108</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014.

<sup>109</sup> Thus, even in 1995-1996, when Arzú won the presidency and the PAN was the most-voted-for party in the legislative election, "Mr. Arzu [sic] nonetheless lost resoundingly to Mr. Portillo throughout the countryside, scraping through only because of his enormous popularity in the capital." See Larry Rohter, "Guatemalan Who Pledges to 'Avoid Excesses' Is Narrowly Elected as President," *The New York Times*, 9 January 1996. See also Gálvez (1996: 5-6).

1990s.<sup>110</sup> Much of the private sector seems to have viewed the PAN as a natural ally, and they donated significant funds. This support, however, was always tentative and was never exclusive. One of the phrases repeated by former PAN leaders in interviews is that business leaders in Guatemala are “betters,” placing their money on multiple parties in order to maximize their odds and minimize risks.<sup>111</sup> Thus, while the PAN received financial backing from the private sector, so did other parties.<sup>112</sup> In addition, the powerful business peak association, the CACIF, kept the PAN at a distance.<sup>113</sup> When the party received donations, these came from individual businesspeople, not the CACIF, which remained neutral.

In terms of territorial organization, the PAN also overcame its most immediate obstacle, though in a manner that would have significant long-term costs. In Guatemala City, the PAN had a fairly robust grassroots organization, which, according to one party founder, was present “both in the upper- and middle-class sectors of the city and the popular

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<sup>110</sup> Both observers and former PAN leaders agree that the PAN enjoyed considerable business support. For example, Lemus (2012: 204) writes that “Arzú had notable connections with the private sector,” and “built a strong party with the support of the business leaders and filled his cabinet with businessmen.” The Guatemalan think tank ASIES (2004: 36) concurs: “In the beginning, the PAN’s base was composed of middle-class professionals and large, medium and small businessmen. It was for that reason that some identified it with the business sector.” Moreover, in its discussion of the PAN’s connections to civil society, it explains: “The most important link was established with the business sector, through relationships that were established informally between members of the PAN leadership and private business associations” (ASIES 2004: 37). For this reason, “[f]rom the first moment, the PAN was identified as a force linked to the interests of the business community” (CIDOB, Arzú). Former PAN leaders agree, arguing that business supported the party and provided it with considerable finances (author’s interviews with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014; and former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014).

<sup>111</sup> Author’s interviews with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014; and former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

<sup>112</sup> For this reason, some observers take issue with attempts to describe the PAN as Guatemala’s “business party.” Sánchez (2008: 134), for example, writes: “The PAN has had informal links with parts of the private sector, but labeling it the party of business...as is commonly done, is plainly a mischaracterization.” Similarly, Schneider (2012: 180) qualifies the PAN as “the putative party of business elites” (Schneider 2012: 180).

<sup>113</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014. In fact, the CACIF and the government (1996-2000) of PAN founder Álvaro Arzú entered into mild conflict over the issue of taxation (Sánchez 2009: 115-116).

sectors.”<sup>114</sup> In the rest of the country, however, the PAN had virtually no organizational presence. In order to establish the minimum presence necessary to gain legal status as a party, Álvaro Arzú reached out to disaffected leaders of an existing party called the Union of the National Center (UCN).<sup>115</sup> The UCN was a relatively new party led by Jorge Carpio Nicolle, the publisher of one of Guatemala’s major newspapers.<sup>116</sup> In 1986, following a dispute with Carpio, the UCN’s National Secretary of Organization and Affiliates, Mario Taracena, resigned from the party. In his previous leadership position in the UCN, Taracena had played a central role in constructing and maintaining its organization throughout the national territory. Shortly after Taracena’s departure from the UCN, Arzú approached and asked him whether he was interested in helping to convert the PAN from a civic committee into a legally recognized party, to which Taracena is said to have responded: “I’ve got that party right here.”<sup>117</sup> The potential contribution of these ex-UCN leaders was clear: while “Arzú and company” were “100 percent city dwellers from the capital,” “Taracena and company” had connections throughout the interior, which was their “value added.”<sup>118</sup> Joining forces with Arzú, Taracena and other ex-UCN leaders such as Roberto Alfaro poached 13 of the UCN’s 20 departmental leaders for the PAN.<sup>119</sup> These additions gave the

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<sup>114</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

<sup>115</sup> The following account draws on author’s interviews with three former national PAN leaders on 30 January 2014, 27 January 2014 and 13 January 2014. Two of them were former UCN leaders, and the third was not. Since all of them offered virtually identical accounts, the story can be viewed as credible.

<sup>116</sup> On the UCN, see Trudeau (1992: 345-346).

<sup>117</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>118</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014.

<sup>119</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

PAN the minimum territorial presence required by Guatemalan law, and in 1989, it gained legal status as a party, allowing it to contest nationally in the 1990 general election.

Yet, as useful as it was in the short term, this strategy of “borrowing” a territorial organization did not solve the PAN’s deeper organizational problems. The reason is that the organization that the PAN inherited from the UCN was largely “an organization on paper,” or even “a fiction of an organization.”<sup>120</sup> In contrast to the committed PAN activists of Guatemala City, the most notable feature of the new local leaders recruited from the UCN was, reportedly, their “bad quality.”<sup>121</sup> The continued weakness of the PAN’s territorial organization outside of the capital was evident to observers. Writing in the early 1990s, for example, Trudeau (1992: 344) commented that “the PAN has emerged as a major electoral player in spite of its lack of an organization at the national level.” This remained true even during the mid-1990s when the PAN was at the height of its popularity. Thus, in the 1995-1996 presidential election, in which Arzú defeated FRG candidate Alfonso Portillo, “Mr. Arzu [*sic*] nonetheless lost resoundingly to Mr. Portillo throughout the countryside, scraping through only because of his enormous popularity in the capital.”<sup>122</sup> In short, the absorption of UCN leaders helped the PAN to gain legal status as a party, but it did provide the party with a strong territorial organization. Moreover, and crucially, the local “caciques” who were absorbed into the PAN in this way had little natural loyalty to the party’s founding leaders.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

<sup>121</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

<sup>122</sup> See Larry Rohter, “Guatemalan Who Pledges to ‘Avoid Excesses’ Is Narrowly Elected as President,” *The New York Times*, 9 January 1996.

<sup>123</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

As discussed below, the absorption of these outsiders of dubious loyalty would eventually contribute to the schisms that would trigger the PAN's collapse.

In spite of the PAN's lack of starting political capital, and the imperfect solutions that it found to compensate for its deficiencies, the party experienced considerable electoral success in the 1990s (see Figure 8.1). In 1990, its debut national election, the PAN won 17.3 percent in the legislative election and its presidential candidate, Álvaro Arzú, came in fourth place, also with 17.3 percent.<sup>124</sup> The PAN "also won the majority of congressional seats from the national capital and carried the presidential vote in Guatemala City as well" (Trudeau 1993: 147), and its candidate for mayor of Guatemala City, Óscar Berger, was also elected. In the 1994 special legislative election,<sup>125</sup> the PAN saw its electoral yield grow to 25.2 percent, and in the 1995-1996 general election, the party swept: it won 34.3 percent in the legislative election, thereby becoming the most-voted-for party in the country, and Arzú, once again the party's candidate for president, was elected.<sup>126</sup> As president, Arzú immediately entered into negotiations with the country's guerrillas, and within one year a

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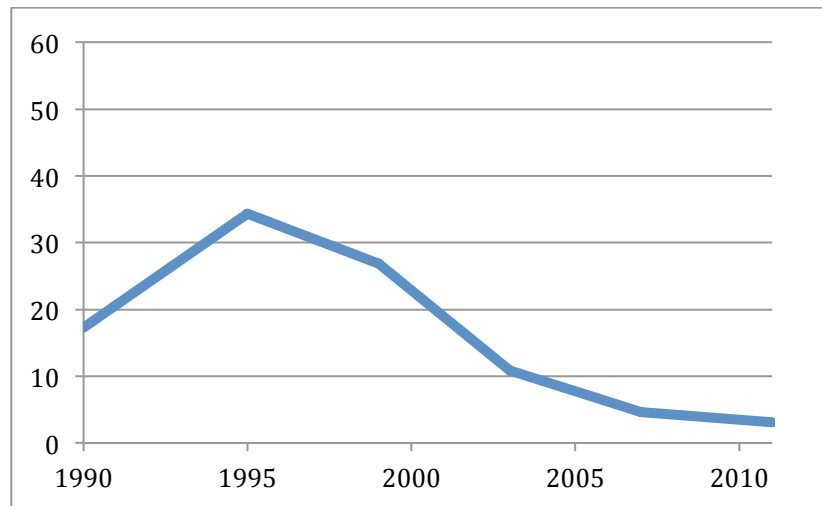
<sup>124</sup> The winner of the 1990 election was Jorge Serrano Elías, a personalistic outsider who shot to the top of the polls in the final stretch of the election. In January 1991, Arzú accepted the position of foreign minister in Serrano's new government. However, he resigned in September of that year, apparently in opposition to Serrano's attempts to normalize relations with neighboring Belize, which many Guatemalans view as part of Guatemalan territory. In May 1993, Serrano unsuccessfully attempted to carry out a "self-coup," suspending the constitution and dissolving Congress and the Supreme Court. Because Arzú had resigned from the government almost two years earlier, however, he seems to have been spared the negative fallout stemming from his association with Serrano and his undemocratic power grab. On Arzú's participation in the Serrano government, see CIDOB, "Arzú." On Serrano's "self-coup," see Cameron (1998) and McCleary (1999).

<sup>125</sup> In August 1994, a special legislative election was held to select a new Congress, following Serrano's illegal dissolution of the previous Congress in 1993. In 1995, regular legislative elections were held.

<sup>126</sup> As Ajenjo and García (2001: 343) explain, the PAN's performance in Guatemala City was once again particularly impressive: "In the presidential elections of 1995, the electoral strongholds of the PAN were the urban areas of the country and the Central District (the capital, Guatemala City). Álvaro Arzú had won the municipal elections of 1981 and 1985 and, as such, was already known there. In all of the Department of Guatemala, the party won above 60 percent of the vote, a very significant absolute majority, as a result of the positive evaluation of the actions of its government at the municipal level."

peace agreement had been signed.<sup>127</sup> As a result, a civil war that had lasted for over thirty years finally came to an end, and Guatemala was able to make a full transition to democracy. Despite this achievement, as well as respectable economic growth during the Arzú administration,<sup>128</sup> support for the PAN declined in the 1999 general election. Óscar Berger, its presidential candidate, was badly beaten in the second round by the FRG's Alfonso Portillo, and the PAN's yield in the legislative election fell to 26.9 percent. Despite this disappointing performance, PAN leaders were confident that they could rebound in 2003, and, as discussed in the next section, it is quite possible that this prediction would have come true had the PAN not descended into damaging—and ultimately fatal—infighting.

Figure 8.1: PAN in Legislative Elections (%)<sup>129</sup>



<sup>127</sup> On the Guatemalan peace accords, see Stanley (2007).

<sup>128</sup> See World Bank indicators: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>. Accessed on 29 April 2014. See also “Entre inversión y señalamientos,” *La Prensa Libre*, 27 December 1999. Annual growth rates during Arzú’s presidency were as follows: 3.0 percent in 1996, 4.4 percent in 1997, 5.0 percent in 1998, 3.8 percent in 1999 and 3.6 percent in 2000.

<sup>129</sup> Source: Nohlen (2005) and Georgetown Political Database of the Americas.



## The Fall of the PAN

If during the 1990s the PAN enjoyed astronomical growth, during the 2000s the party experienced an equally dramatic decline. After winning the presidency and becoming the most-voted-for party in Congress in 1995-1996, and then making it to the second round of the presidential election—remarkably, the only incumbent party in Guatemala to do so since the transition to competitive elections—and coming in second place in legislative elections in 1999, the PAN entered into terminal decline. In the 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections, the party hemorrhaged votes (see Figure 8.1), and was reduced to marginal status. This was a shocking development for PAN leaders, who even after the party’s disappointing performance in 1999 were optimistic about the future.<sup>130</sup> What explains this collapse? In this section, I show that the PAN’s collapse was the product of two devastating schisms: the first in 2000, with the departure of PAN founder and former president Álvaro Arzú, and the second in 2003, with the departure of PAN founder and presidential candidate Óscar Berger. I argue that these schisms were not simply the result of voluntaristic factors, such as Arzú’s reportedly petty and vindictive personality, but instead the product of deeper factors related to the PAN’s status as a non-authoritarian successor party. Since PAN leaders had never “fought in the trenches” together in an authoritarian regime, they lacked a strong source of cohesion. This inherent proneness to division was exacerbated by the strategy of “borrowing” a territorial organization from an existing party, since the outsiders who were absorbed into the PAN lacked loyalty to its founding leaders and, when the time came, did not hesitate to rebel against them.

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<sup>130</sup> According to one former PAN leader, they were certain that “the party was an invincible machine that was easily going to win the next election.” Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

In comparing the trajectories of Guatemala's PAN and El Salvador's ARENA, one of the differences that stands out most relates to cohesion. In the case of ARENA, party leaders and activists were driven by a powerful sense of "*mística*," the leadership of Roberto D'Aubuisson was undisputed and the party was largely spared the damaging effects of schisms.<sup>131</sup> The PAN was different. Almost from the beginning, it was divided into multiple factions. While the borders were fuzzy and sometimes overlapping, at least four major factions could be identified: first, the unconditional supporters of Álvaro Arzú, or "*Arzuistas*;" second, the group linked to Óscar Berger known as "*La Muní*" (in reference to the municipality of Guatemala City, of which Berger was mayor from 1991 to 1999); third, the group known as "the Paris Club," which viewed itself as a sort of intellectual and upper-class elite within the party; and fourth, the group linked to relative newcomers from the country's interior, including former UCN leaders such as Mario Taracena and Roberto Alfaro.<sup>132</sup> These factions were not rooted in programmatic differences, but instead revolved around personalities competing for the spoils of office, such as congressional nominations. As one former PAN leader explains: "There were no ideological differences...[because] everyone took such a pragmatic line... The argument was over who was going to form the leadership of the party...because it was evident that the group that formed the leadership of the party

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<sup>131</sup> As noted in Chapters 6 and 7, ARENA did experience a relatively serious schism following the party's loss in the 2009 presidential election, with the departure of several ARENA deputies and the formation of a new party, GANA. However, this was the first serious schism that ARENA had experienced in 27 years, and it had no discernible effect on the party's electoral performance.

<sup>132</sup> This description draws on author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 24 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014; and former national PAN leader, 31 January 2014.

would make the big decisions about who would occupy popularly elected positions. That was where the different currents began to emerge.”<sup>133</sup>

In the PAN’s early years, the potentially damaging effects of these internal divisions were mostly kept in check by the coattails of Álvaro Arzú. As discussed above, the PAN was born as a “civic committee” to support Arzú’s bid for mayor of Guatemala City in the 1985 election. After legally becoming a party in 1989, the PAN campaigned by promising to replicate Arzú’s successful tenure as mayor (1986-1990) in the country as a whole. During the PAN’s first few elections, Arzú was a clear asset to the PAN. In the 1985 election, Arzú benefited from having won the 1982 mayoral election (though he could not take office because of the March 1982 coup), and in the 1990 and 1995-1996 elections, he benefited from his reputation earned as mayor. Given that much of the PAN’s appeal stemmed from the figure of Arzú, and that he was always at the top of the party ticket, other PAN leaders had a strong incentive to support him—or at least not to rebel against him.

In the latter half of the 1990s, however, the PAN’s internal divisions began to be expressed more openly. Paradoxically, one of the main triggers of this was Arzú’s victory in the 1995-1996 presidential election. While this might have served as a blessing for the party by raising its profile and allowing future candidates to run on a record of accomplishment in office (e.g., signing of the peace accords), it immediately brought to the fore two major points of contention. The first was presidential succession. Because Guatemalan law did not permit presidential reelection, the issue of who would succeed Arzú as the PAN’s presidential candidate in the 1999 election quickly emerged. The second issue was leadership of the party itself. Specifically, there were disagreements about what Arzú’s role in the PAN

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<sup>133</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 31 January 2014.

should be after the end of his presidency. One former PAN leader described the problem by comparing ex-presidents to “Chinese vases”: they are pretty, but you do not know what to do with them.<sup>134</sup> In these conflicts, Arzú did not play the part of the disinterested statesman. In order to prevent other PAN leaders from usurping his authority, he reportedly played an active role in internal party politics, playing factions off one another in a “Machiavellian” manner.<sup>135</sup> Arzú seems to have been especially concerned about the rise of Óscar Berger within the party. The two men had been close friends for many years, and are described by those who know them as having been “best friends” and even “brothers.”<sup>136</sup> Arzú reportedly played a key role in making Berger the PAN’s candidate for mayor of Guatemala City in 1990 (a position Berger would hold from 1991 to 1999).<sup>137</sup> However, because Arzú viewed Berger as his “creation,” he reportedly was dismayed when Berger began to develop an independent power base within the party.<sup>138</sup> The relationship between the two men degenerated into hostility, which continued after Berger became the PAN’s 1999 presidential candidate. According to those in Berger’s inner circle, Arzú not only did not support him in the election, but deliberately undermined him in various ways.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, they charge that Arzú used his influence to have internal elections for party authorities scheduled at the worst possible time for Berger: on 29 December 1999, three

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<sup>134</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>135</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014.

<sup>136</sup> Author’s interviews with former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 24 January 2014; and former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

<sup>137</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 24 January 2014.

<sup>138</sup> Author’s interviews with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014, and with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

<sup>139</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

days after the second round of the presidential election.<sup>140</sup> Since it was clear that Berger was headed for a resounding defeat in the presidential election, Berger's supporters believed that the date had been chosen in order to maximize the chances of Arzú's candidates—Arzú was, after all, still president of Guatemala—and to minimize Berger's, since the latter would not have time to prepare and would be seen as a loser after his presidential defeat.<sup>141</sup>

If Arzú's plan was to hold onto control of the PAN, the plan backfired and set in motion the first of two major party schisms. Unlike in the past, when a single consensus slate of candidates had been presented, the internal PAN election of December 1999 pitted two opposing slates against one another. As a result, the previously submerged factional divisions exploded into the open. The two candidates for the position of general secretary were Emilio Saca, who was openly backed by Arzú, and Leonel López Rodas, the president of Congress and former energy minister.<sup>142</sup> While Saca was the candidate of the *Arzúistas*, López Rodas was the candidate of two opposing factions: Berger's group (*La Muni*) and the group associated with leaders from the country's interior, including former UCN leaders. Unlike the founding generation of PAN leaders, virtually all of whom were from Guatemala City, López Rodas was from Quetzaltenango, and while he had never belonged to the UCN, he was recruited to the PAN by former UCN leaders Mario Taracena and Roberto Alfaro.<sup>143</sup> Each of these groups had different reasons to oppose Arzú by supporting López Rodas.

Berger's group appears to have been motivated at least partially by a desire for revenge

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<sup>140</sup> The charge that the date was chosen in order to disadvantage Berger is given some credibility by the fact that Guatemalan electoral law gave parties discretion in scheduling internal elections. For more on this and the lead-up to the internal election, see "Se agitan aguas en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 2 December 1999.

<sup>141</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

<sup>142</sup> See "Saca es favorito en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 27 December 1999.

<sup>143</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014.

against Arzú for his lack of support in the 1999 presidential election.<sup>144</sup> Another López Rodas backer similarly admits to having been motivated by “revenge” for an earlier dispute with Arzú.<sup>145</sup> Another leader from the López Rodas camp claims that they were driven by the loftier goals of institutionalizing and democratizing a party that, until then, had been excessively dependent on the personality of Arzú and governed in a top-down manner.<sup>146</sup> With their forces combined, these groups mustered the votes necessary to elect López Rodas as PAN general secretary.<sup>147</sup> In the wake of this electoral upset, tensions between *Arzúistas* and López Rodas supporters intensified.<sup>148</sup> In early June 2000, in the face of public recriminations from party authorities, the *Arzúista* leader of the PAN congressional caucus resigned his post.<sup>149</sup> When rumors began to circulate that key *Arzúista* leaders would be brought before the PAN’s Disciplinary Tribunal to lay the groundwork for their expulsion, they decided to resign.<sup>150</sup> Over the next few days, 15 of the PAN’s 37 members of Congress resigned, as well as Arzú himself and several high-profile party founders.<sup>151</sup> These PAN

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<sup>144</sup> See “Berger va por López,” *La Prensa Libre*, 29 December 1999. Also author’s interviews with former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014; former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014; and former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

<sup>145</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>146</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014. See also ASIES (2004: 27).

<sup>147</sup> See “Grupo de Arzú derrotado por López Rodas,” *La Prensa Libre*, 30 December 1999.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, the interview with Mario Taracena in “Arzú no quiere soltar el poder,” *La Prensa Libre*, 5 March 2000.

<sup>149</sup> See “Pugna en el PAN,” *La Prensa Libre*, 3 June 2000, and “En busca de un jefe,” *La Prensa Libre*, 5 June 2000.

<sup>150</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 31 January 2014.

<sup>151</sup> See “El PAN se divide,” *La Prensa Libre*, 6 June 2000, and “Arzú por dimitir,” *La Prensa Libre*, 8 June 2000.

defectors would go on to form a new political grouping, the Unionist Party, which was legally registered in 2003.<sup>152</sup>

The second, and even more consequential, PAN schism occurred in the first half of 2003. Although the 2000 schism had been a blow to the party, there is good reason to believe that the PAN could have survived it. While many prominent leaders had chosen to leave the PAN—most notably, Álvaro Arzú himself—the bulk of the rank-and-file appear to have stuck with it.<sup>153</sup> This helps to explain the weak electoral performance of the breakaway Unionist Party, which never crossed the 10-percent threshold in any election.<sup>154</sup> Moreover, the PAN remained one of the largest parties in Congress, and maintained control of multiple municipal governments. Under the leadership of Leonel López Rodas, the PAN also took steps to make up for some of its deficiencies. Feeling that the traditional focus on pragmatism was not sufficient to maintain an activist base, the party attempted to develop a clearer ideological profile, defining itself as “social Christian” and flirting with the “third way” of Tony Blair and Bill Clinton.<sup>155</sup> It also took the unprecedented step of scheduling a primary to select its 2003 presidential candidate. Given the extremely hostile relationship between the FRG government of President Alfonso Portillo (2000-2004), the private sector

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<sup>152</sup> On the Unionist Party, see ASIES (2012: 122-132).

<sup>153</sup> According to one prominent *Arzquista* who helped to found the Unionist Party: “A very small part of the organization came with us, [but] the majority of the party structure stayed with the PAN, fundamentally with Óscar Berger. The [party] structure thought that Óscar Berger could be the future president and, thus, saw in him a possibility of reaching government and preferred to stay with the PAN. The Unionist Party took with it part of the structure, but it was smaller” (author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 31 January 2014). This is also the assessment of Leonel López Rodas, who claims that “the base wasn’t touched; on the contrary, it consolidated” (author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014).

<sup>154</sup> In the 2003 legislative election, the Unionist Party won 6.0 percent; in 2007, it won 6.1 percent; and in 2011, it won 2.7 percent. See Georgetown Political Database of the Americas.

<sup>155</sup> Author’s interviews with former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014, and former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014.

also appears to have been motivated to support the business-friendly PAN in the upcoming election.<sup>156</sup> Finally, the PAN had a strong potential candidate in Óscar Berger. Although he had lost to Portillo in the second round of the 1999 election, he was believed to be a strong contender for 2003—a belief confirmed by the fact that, as described below, he went on to win the presidency that year, albeit not as the candidate of the PAN.

This second schism was triggered by the issues of who should be the PAN candidate and run the party in the lead-up to the 2003 presidential election. This time the conflict was between former allies Óscar Berger and Leonel López Rodas. In December 1999, the two men had joined forces to defeat the slate of *Arzuista* candidates in the party's internal elections. Afterwards, López Rodas took control of the PAN as general secretary, and Berger disappeared from national and party politics.<sup>157</sup> In 2002, however, Berger returned to political life and announced his intention to run again as the candidate of the PAN in the 2003 presidential election. This pitted him against López Rodas, who also hoped to be the PAN's candidate, in a rancorous primary election that was widely covered by the press.<sup>158</sup> When the primary was held in November 2002, Berger won a clear victory with 75 percent of the vote.<sup>159</sup> This did not resolve the dispute between the two men, however, which, if anything, intensified.<sup>160</sup> According to one interviewee from the López Rodas camp, the main

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<sup>156</sup> See "Guatemalan Businessmen Pursue Lost Power on the Campaign Trail," *NotiCen: Central American & Caribbean Affairs*, 24 July 2003.

<sup>157</sup> See CIDOB, "Berger."

<sup>158</sup> See, for example, "La tormenta no cese en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 6 November 2002, and "A 8 días de elecciones no cesan los reclamos," *La Prensa Libre*, 10 November 2002.

<sup>159</sup> See "Berger acumula 118 mil 493 votos," *La Prensa Libre*, 19 November 2002.

<sup>160</sup> See "Berger busca ganar poder dentro del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 17 December 2002; "Nubes oscuras dentro del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 20 December 2002; "Prevén agitada reunión en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 7 January 2003; "Oscar Berger y Leonel López liman asperezas en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 9 January 2003; "Berger se aparta de López," *La Prensa Libre*, 16 February 2003; "Se reúnen por separado," *La Prensa Libre*, 19



problem was Berger's imperious attitude and his mistaken belief that, by winning the presidential primary, he had also won control of the party.<sup>161</sup> They also resented the unmistakable support that Berger had received from the private sector during the primary, which they believed had given him an unfair advantage.<sup>162</sup> According to Berger's supporters, the problem was López Rodas' obsession with becoming president, and the fear that, since the primary was not legally binding, he would simply ignore the results and use his authority as general secretary to register himself as the PAN's presidential candidate.<sup>163</sup> As tensions grew, Berger approached smaller parties about the possibility of forming an electoral coalition to be called the Grand National Alliance (GANA).<sup>164</sup> Berger seems to have seen this as a kind of insurance policy, since if López Rodas refused to register him as the PAN's presidential candidate, he could run anyway as these parties' candidate.<sup>165</sup> In late April 2003,

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February 2003; "La división, un serio error," *La Prensa Libre*, 19 February 2003; "Berger quiere cambiar la dirección del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 20 February 2003; "Tensa calma en las filas panistas," *La Prensa Libre*, 21 February 2003; "Continúa lucha en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 25 February 2003; "Berger y López apoyan comisión negociadora," *La Prensa Libre*, 26 February 2003; "Falta el respeto y está fuera de ley," *La Prensa Libre*, 3 March 2003; "La dura realidad dentro del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 7 March 2003; "Asambleas generan controversia en PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 18 March 2003; "Panistas buscan una solución a problemas," *La Prensa Libre*, 18 April 2003; and "Más problemas se avecinan al PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 26 April 2003.

<sup>161</sup> Author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014; former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014; and former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014. See "Berger busca ganar poder dentro del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 17 December 2002, and "Berger quiere cambiar la dirección del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 20 February 2003.

<sup>162</sup> Author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014, and former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014. This was not just the perception of Berger's opponents. As Sánchez (2009: 123) explains, Berger's relationship with business elites was confirmed by the nature of the government he formed after winning the 2003 election: "The election of Oscar Berger to the presidency in 2004 signaled the return of a pro-business government, or as some put it, a 'government of entrepreneurs'. No less than nine out of the 13 ministers in the cabinet could be considered bona fide representatives of the private sector, as well as six out of 11 secretaries of state."

<sup>163</sup> Author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014. Even one of López Rodas' former allies admits that he had an "obsession with being the [presidential] candidate" (author's interview with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014).

<sup>164</sup> See "Anuncian alianza Gana," *La Prensa Libre*, 27 April 2003.

<sup>165</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

this fear became a self-fulfilling prophecy, when the PAN's executive committee rejected the proposed GANA coalition and voted to revoke Berger's candidacy, ostensibly because he had violated the party's internal statutes by seeking the nomination of other parties.<sup>166</sup>

Berger responded by resigning from the PAN<sup>167</sup> and running as the GANA candidate.<sup>168</sup>

Thereafter, the PAN opted to make López Rodas its candidate, despite the fact that he had won a mere 25 percent in the November 2002 primary.<sup>169</sup> Relations between those who remained in the PAN and those who followed Berger became so toxic that when Berger made it to the second round of the presidential election (López Rodas came in fourth place), the PAN gave its official support to Berger's left-leaning competitor, Álvaro Colom.<sup>170</sup>

The 2003 schism, even more than the one in 2000, spelt the death of the PAN. The main difference between the two schisms was the sequence of events: the 2000 schism occurred just after the PAN left office and resulted in the departure of a former president (Arzú); the 2003 schism occurred just as the PAN was poised to return to office and resulted in the departure of the man likely to be the next president (Berger). The party's decision to revoke Berger's nomination was truly suicidal. A poll in January 2003, when Berger was still

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<sup>166</sup> See "PAN rechaza alianza," *La Prensa Libre*, 29 April 2003, and "Quitan a Berger la candidatura," *La Prensa Libre*, 1 May 2003.

<sup>167</sup> See "Berger se aparta del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 2 May 2003; "Berger y 9 diputados renuncian al PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 3 June 2003; and "Berger: Ojo y oído, que no soy del PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 16 June 2003.

<sup>168</sup> GANA was composed of three parties: the National Solidarity Party (PSN), the Patriot Party (PP) and the Reformist Movement (MR). In the words of one Berger collaborator, these were "tiny parties," with small organizations and few supporters. However, they contributed something essential: partisan nomination for Berger's candidacy, a requirement of Guatemalan law. Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

<sup>169</sup> See "López iría por el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 18 June 2003.

<sup>170</sup> See "Siguen problemas en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 15 November 2003. Also author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014, and former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

the PAN's candidate, found that 45.1 percent of Guatemalans intended to vote for him in that year's presidential election, giving him a 35-point lead over the runner-up.<sup>171</sup> The fact that Berger actually went on to win the presidency—albeit not as the candidate of the PAN—strongly suggests that the PAN drove a winning candidate from its ranks.<sup>172</sup> This did not simply lead to a lost election; it led to the death of the party. Unlike when Arzú left the PAN, Berger took with him the bulk of the PAN's organization.<sup>173</sup> One close collaborator of Berger asserts that the PAN was left an “orphan,” and “held onto the official shell [of the party], nothing more.”<sup>174</sup> Another PAN leader who left in 2000, then briefly returned years later, estimates that Berger took with him 85 percent of PAN leaders—“the true leadership of the PAN”—leaving behind only the “garbage.”<sup>175</sup> Many of those who left likely did so because they could sense that Berger was on course to win the presidency and they wanted to be on the winning side. Others were likely turned off by the blatant hypocrisy of López Rodas, who had long declared his commitment to the “democratization” of the PAN, ignoring the results of a primary in which his competitor had won 75 percent and appointing himself instead.<sup>176</sup> In addition, Berger took with him virtually all of the PAN's supporters in

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<sup>171</sup> See “Oscar Berger y el PAN, a la cabeza,” *La Prensa Libre*, 15 January 2003.

<sup>172</sup> In the first round of the 2003 presidential election, Berger won 34.3 percent, against 26.6 percent for the runner-up, Álvaro Colom. In the second round, Berger won 54.1 percent, against 45.9 percent for Colom. See Georgetown Political Database of the Americas.

<sup>173</sup> See, for example, “Promete referendo,” *La Prensa Libre*, 5 May 2003; “Seguidores de Berger dejarán cargos en PAN,” *La Prensa Libre*, 7 May 2003; “Diputados afines a Berger se irán del PAN,” *La Prensa Libre*, 1 June 2003; and “Berger y 9 diputados renuncian al PAN,” *La Prensa Libre*, 3 June 2003.

<sup>174</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014.

<sup>175</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 24 January 2014.

<sup>176</sup> As one former PAN leader who had supported López Rodas admits in his discussion of Guatemalan voters: “[W]e ourselves facilitated the decline of the PAN, because the people [*el pueblo*] took it as a betrayal...that we did not anoint their favorite candidate, Berger. So, obviously, they carried Berger to the presidency and punished the PAN” (author's interview with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014).

the business community.<sup>177</sup> As a result, “all of the money left the party.”<sup>178</sup> The PAN never recovered from these losses. Having driven out its most popular and emblematic leaders, lacking even the weak organization that it had once possessed and abandoned by the private sector, the party had no legs to stand on. While it never formally ceased to exist, its vote share dwindled and its congressional representation contracted to such a degree that, by 2014, it had only congressman: the 28-year-old son of the party’s assistant general secretary.<sup>179</sup> In short, the PAN had collapsed, a clear case of party-building failure.

In attempting to account for the devastating schisms that the PAN suffered in 2000 and 2003—and thus to explain the collapse of the party—it is tempting to resort to voluntaristic explanations. The personality of Álvaro Arzú, in particular, is commonly cited by participants as one of the main causes of the PAN’s failure. While virtually everyone associated with the PAN expresses admiration for him, they also describe him as petty and vindictive, and suggest that he was far more interested in possessing a personalistic vehicle than in building a truly institutionalized party.<sup>180</sup> In his analysis of conservative parties in Guatemala, Lemus (2012) similarly points to Arzú as a cause of the PAN’s demise. He

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<sup>177</sup> See “Guatemalan Businessmen Pursue Lost Power on the Campaign Trail,” *NotiCen: Central American & Caribbean Affairs*, 24 July 2003. Also author’s interviews with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014; former national PAN leader, 3 February 2014; and former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014. See also Stanley (2007: 136).

<sup>178</sup> Author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>179</sup> Author’s interviews with national PAN leader, 22 January 2014, and national PAN leader, 20 January 2014.

<sup>180</sup> Critics describe him as “petty and egocentric” (author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014), asserting that “he does not like to be in anyone else’s shadow” (author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 5 February 2014). Even allies admit that “he has a strong personality and likes to surround himself with people who say, ‘yes, Álvaro’ ” (author’s interview with former national PAN leader, 20 January 2014). Arzú conducted himself in a similar manner after forming the Unionist Party. As in the PAN, he seems to have been very worried about having his authority usurped, and thus preferred to appoint family members to important posts—including his wife as the party’s 2011 presidential candidate. See “Sobrino y tío desunionistas,” *La Prensa Libre*, April 7 2003, and “Y la esposa se hizo candidata a la presidencia,” *El Periódico*, 3 July 2011.

argues that one of the main reasons that the PAN collapsed was that “the private sector realized that the party was a platform based on the personality of Arzú,” and abandoned it in response to some of his more questionable actions, particularly his unwillingness to support Berger in the 1999 election (Lemus 2012: 205). Yet, while Arzú’s personality surely did not help matters, after 2000 he was no longer part of the PAN and, as argued above, the PAN remained in a relatively strong position after his departure. Other voluntaristic factors that could be cited are Óscar Berger’s reportedly disrespectful attitude toward the PAN authorities after his 2002 return to politics, and Leonel López Rodas’ apparent obsession with running for president, regardless of the cost for the party (see above). When one looks at this series of bad decisions as a whole, however, rather than at any single bad decision, the notion that the PAN’s collapse can be explained by voluntaristic factors seems less plausible. It is true that almost everyone involved made selfish and shortsighted decisions, sacrificing the good of the party for their own self-interest.<sup>181</sup> To say that PAN leaders such as Arzú, Berger and López Rodas made bad decisions, however, is not really an explanation—even if the claim is accurate. Instead, it raises a more fundamental question: why were PAN leaders so prone to division? Where was the “glue” that held together other new conservative parties like El Salvador’s ARENA and Chile’s UDI, and why didn’t the PAN possess it?

The explanation for the PAN’s lack of cohesion can be found in its status as a non-authoritarian successor party, in two respects. First, because PAN leaders had never “fought in the trenches” together in an authoritarian regime, they did not inherit the sense of “*mística*,” loyalty to the top party leadership and affective attachments to the party often found in authoritarian successor parties. When one compares the PAN to ARENA, the difference is

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<sup>181</sup> One op-ed captured this well when it described internal PAN politics as “kindergarten politics.” See Héctor Mauricio López Bonilla, “¿La política de Kindergarten?,” *La Prensa Libre*, 20 February 2003.

stark. In the case of ARENA, party leaders viewed themselves as part of an epic struggle pitting civilization against Marxist totalitarianism. Roberto D'Aubuisson had devoted years of his life to this struggle as the deputy director of military intelligence, and after the October 1979 coup, this struggle continued through “death squad” violence. ARENA leaders viewed themselves as victims of terrible persecution, and could point to gunshot wounds and assassinated leaders as evidence to support their interpretation. This formative experience gave ARENA members a powerful sense of being part of a greater cause, increased the status of D'Aubuisson to mythic proportions and made the idea of defecting to another party virtually unthinkable.<sup>182</sup> The origins of the PAN, in comparison, were rather humdrum. It was founded to support the mayoral candidacy of Álvaro Arzú, not to defend the fatherland against a global communist conspiracy. While PAN leaders were proud of their party, its persistent emphasis of pragmatism meant that it was never particularly clear what distinguished it from other parties—and thus what should prevent them from abandoning it. In an extraordinary moment of candor during the 1990 general election, Arzú, in reference to himself and rival presidential candidates, admitted: “There’s no real difference between any of us.”<sup>183</sup> Similarly, while PAN leaders admired Arzú for his intelligence and administrative competence, they had little affection for him. This is in stark contrast to ARENA, where, to this day, the deceased Roberto D'Aubuisson—“The Major,” as he is known—is universally revered and remains the undisputed giant of the ARENA pantheon. In short, the PAN, unlike ARENA, lacked a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint

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<sup>182</sup> As noted in Chapter 6 and 7, ARENA did experience a relatively serious schism following the party’s loss in the 2009 presidential election, with the departure of several ARENA deputies and the formation of a new party, which, coincidentally, was also called GANA. However, this was the first serious schism that ARENA had experienced in 27 years, and it had no discernible effect on the party’s electoral performance.

<sup>183</sup> See Lindsey Gruson, “In Guatemala, a Taste for Strongmen Lingers,” *The New York Times*, 11 October 1990.

struggle. This made it prone to division not only in tough times, as in the aftermath of the 1999 electoral defeat, but even in good times, as in the lead-up to the 2003 election.

Second, because the PAN did not inherit a territorial organization from a previous authoritarian regime, as with ARENA's inheritance of ORDEN, it was forced it to pursue an organization-building strategy that exacerbated its inherent proneness to division. As discussed above, the PAN was born in such a state of organizational weakness that, in order to meet the basic requirements of Guatemalan law, it had to "borrow" an organization from local leaders of an existing party, the UCN. The organization provided by these local "caciques" was largely a "fiction."<sup>184</sup> What was *not* fictional, however, were the voting rights that they had in internal PAN elections.<sup>185</sup> This was significant, since the loyalty of these new leaders to the PAN's founding generation was dubious, at best. For example, one former UCN leader who was absorbed into the PAN openly admits that he spent years plotting to overthrow Arzú as "revenge" for an earlier slight.<sup>186</sup> Working with Leonel López Rodas—whom he had brought into the PAN in the first place—Taracena and at least one other former UCN leader, Roberto Alfaro, helped to coordinate an uprising of departmental leaders from the country's interior against the *Arzuista* slate in the December 1999 internal elections.<sup>187</sup> As discussed above, this rebellion was the cause of the PAN's first schism in 2000. These three figures—Taracena, Roberto Alfaro and López Rodas—would later play a

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<sup>184</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 13 January 2014.

<sup>185</sup> In the December 1999 internal election, party authorities were chosen by 160 departmental delegates representing 80 municipalities throughout the country. See "Saca es favorito en el PAN," *La Prensa Libre*, 27 December 1999.

<sup>186</sup> Author's interview with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.

<sup>187</sup> Author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014, and former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014. See also ASIES (2004: 27).

critical role in retracting the nomination of Óscar Berger as the PAN's presidential candidate in the 2003 election. All three belonged to the PAN's executive committee, the party's maximum authority, where they used their slight majority to strip Berger of his nomination.<sup>188</sup> As described above, this retraction of Berger's nomination was the cause of the 2003 schism, which in turn triggered the PAN's collapse. Thus, the PAN's lack of authoritarian inheritance with respect to territorial organization contributed to its collapse in a second, more indirect way. Without the support of the departmental leaders coordinated by ex-UCN leaders Taracena and Alfaro, it is unlikely that Berger would have been able to defeat the *Arzuista* slate in the PAN's December 1999 elections. Had the *Arzuista* slate won, the major cause of the party's first schism would have been averted. Even if Berger's faction had managed to defeat the *Arzuistas* on its own, the major cause of the 2003 schism—namely, the conflict between Berger and López Rodas (who had been recruited to the PAN by ex-UCN leaders)—would have been avoided, since pro-Berger politicians would have been in control of the party. To be sure, the PAN may have eventually splintered anyway, given its inherent proneness to division. The strategy that the PAN pursued in its early years to obtain a territorial organization, however, clearly contributed to such divisions and accelerated the party's collapse.

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<sup>188</sup> See “PAN rechaza alianza,” *La Prensa Libre*, 29 April 2003, and “Quitan a Berger la candidatura,” *La Prensa Libre*, 1 May 2003. Also author's interviews with former national PAN leader, 27 January 2014, and former national PAN leader, 30 January 2014.



## Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the PAN, a case of failed conservative party-building. I argued that the party's failure, paradoxically, was the result of its strong democratic credentials. Unlike ARENA, an authoritarian successor party that inherited valuable resources from El Salvador's pre-1979 military regime, the PAN began its life with very limited stocks of starting political capital. ARENA was born with a strong territorial organization, a popular and well-known brand, business connections and a source of cohesion rooted in a history joint struggle. The PAN was born with none of these things. The PAN managed to overcome some of its deficiencies enough to enjoy short-term electoral success, winning the presidency and performing well in a handful of elections in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the party collapsed in the early 2000s after two devastating schisms: first, with the departure of Álvaro Arzú in 2000, and later—and even more devastatingly—with the departure of Óscar Berger in 2003, just months before that year's presidential election. I argued that these schisms were partially the product of the PAN's lack of authoritarian inheritance. First, since its members had never “fought in the trenches” together, they were not bound by the same *mística* and sense of camaraderie as in the case of ARENA. Second, because of its extreme organizational weakness at the time of its birth, the PAN was forced to make alliances with chieftains of an existing party, who felt little loyalty to the PAN's founding leaders. The result was party schism and, ultimately, collapse.

## CHAPTER 9

### Conclusion

In this study, I have examined variation in conservative party-building in Latin America since the onset of the third wave. As the coup option became both costly and undesirable, elites in the region became “political orphans” and were compelled to defend their interests through alternative means. The result was conservative party formation in several countries. While some of these new conservative parties grew into enduring electoral successes, others failed to take root. In the preceding chapters, I presented an original theory to explain this variation: authoritarian inheritance. The point of departure for this argument was the curious fact that the most successful new conservative parties in the region all had deep roots in former dictatorships. In other words, they were authoritarian successor parties, or parties founded by high-level incumbents of former dictatorships that continue to operate after a transition to democracy. Parties with better democratic credentials, in contrast, tended to fare worse. I argued that this was not a coincidence. Specifically, I argued that the successful parties succeeded *because* of their links to former dictatorships, not in spite of them. These authoritarian successor parties inherited valuable resources from the old regime, such as a brand, territorial organization, clientelistic networks, business connections and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. To illustrate this argument, I examined four cases: Chile’s UDI, Argentina’s UCEDE, El Salvador’s ARENA and Guatemala’s PAN. The UDI and ARENA were cases of successful party-building, and were also authoritarian successor parties. The UCEDE and PAN were cases of failed party-building, and were not authoritarian successor parties. I examined the

trajectory of each party in detail, and traced its success or failure to the presence or absence of authoritarian inheritance.

In this concluding chapter, I discuss the contributions of the study, consider the future of conservative party-building in Latin America and outline directions for future research. In the first section, I discuss the study's contributions to three scholarly literatures: the literature on Latin American politics, the literature on party-building and the literature on regimes. In the second section, I consider the future of conservative party-building in Latin America. Based on my theory of authoritarian inheritance, we would expect this future to be bleak—with one notable possible exception, Peru's *Fujimorismo*. I also consider three theories that might provide alternative paths to conservative party-building in the future: Barndt's (forthcoming) argument about "corporation-based parties," Van Dyck's (2013) argument about the "paradox of adversity" and Gibson's (1996) argument about the "conservatization of populism." I conclude that, thus far at least, these do not represent viable alternative paths to conservative party-building. In the third section, I shift gears to discuss the phenomenon of authoritarian successor parties. While in preceding chapters I discussed contemporary authoritarian successor parties of the right in Latin America, in this section I broaden the temporal, ideological and geographical scope. I highlight that authoritarian successor parties are found in several of the world's major regions, have emerged in different historical periods and occupy diverse locations on the left-right spectrum. I then outline two important areas for future research: (1) variation in performance among authoritarian successor parties, and (2) the effects of authoritarian successor parties on democracy.

## Contributions to the Literature

This study has examined variation among conservative parties formed in Latin America since the onset of the third wave, and presented an original theory—the theory of authoritarian inheritance—to explain this variation. In doing so, the study makes contributions to three literatures. First, it contributes to the literature on Latin American politics. While some excellent works have been produced on the Latin American right,<sup>1</sup> Latin Americanists have generally preferred to focus their attention on the other end of the ideological spectrum. This study represents a useful corrective to this tendency. Much of the empirical material presented is new. In the case of Guatemala’s PAN, for example, virtually nothing had ever been written on it before. New material was also presented on more widely studied parties. In the case of Chile’s UDI, for example, I demonstrated that the party was born during a low point in the *gremialista*-Pinochet relationship, a fact not widely known, and one that is surprising, given the UDI’s strong support for the Pinochet legacy after the transition to democracy. The most important way that the study contributes to this literature, though, is with its comparative perspective. Most existing studies of the right in Latin America have been either case studies or edited volumes. This study is the first book-length comparison of conservative parties in Latin America ever written. By examining the broad phenomenon of conservative party formation in the region since the onset of the third wave, and by developing a theory to explain variation in the trajectories of these new parties, the study contributes to the literature on Latin American politics.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Chalmers et al. (1992a); Gibson (1996); Middlebrook (2000a); Payne (2000); Power (2000); Roberts (2006a); Bowen (2011); and Luna and Rovira (2014a).

Second, this study contributes to the literature on party-building. While there is a long tradition within political science of studying parties, in recent years there has been a new burst of scholarly interest in one of the most fundamental—and still much-debated—questions related to parties: why do strong parties emerge in some places but not others?<sup>2</sup> This study contributes to the literature on party-building in two ways. First, by developing the theory of authoritarian inheritance, it outlines a theoretically original path to party-building success. The focus of the study is relatively specific: it examines conservative parties in Latin America formed since the onset of the third wave. However, there is good reason to believe that its major finding—that roots in former dictatorships can, under some circumstances, be a blessing rather than a curse for new parties—can travel to other regions and other kinds of parties, such as left-wing parties. Second, the study adds to findings about the relationship between regime type and party-building, specifically the argument that stable democratic competition may not be ideal for party-building. Van Dyck (2013) has recently argued in his study of left-wing parties in Latin America that being born under the adverse conditions of authoritarianism may help parties to succeed in the long run by providing an incentive to construct strong organizations. Levitsky, Loxton and Van Dyck (n.d.) have recently made a similar argument, arguing that episodes of intense conflict, such as revolution, civil war and authoritarian rule, are more likely to lead to strong parties than “normal” democratic competition. This study adds to such findings by highlighting an additional way that authoritarianism may contribute to party-building: authoritarian inheritance.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Kalyvas (1996); Van Cott (2005); Hale (2006); Roberts (2006b); Mainwaring and Zoco (2007); Mustillo (2007, 2009); Hicken (2009); Hanson (2010); Art (2011); LeBas (2011); Arriola (2013); Tavits (2013); Luna (2014); Ziblatt (forthcoming); and Levitsky, Loxton, Van Dyck and Domínguez (n.d.).

Finally, this study contributes to the literature on regimes. In recent years, scholars have examined the various ways that democracy and authoritarianism may bleed into one another, through phenomena such as “hybrid regimes,” “authoritarian enclaves” and “subnational authoritarianism.”<sup>3</sup> This study contributes to this literature by drawing attention to one common—but underappreciated—expression of this “grey area”: authoritarian successor parties. It also raises questions about the effects of authoritarian successor parties on democracy. While phenomena such as authoritarian enclaves or subnational authoritarianism clearly damage (or even preclude) democracy, the effects of authoritarian successor parties are more ambiguous. As discussed below, authoritarian successor parties may do harm to democratic regimes in some ways, but play a more constructive role in other ways. It is very likely that their effects on democracy, unlike other phenomena found in the “grey area” (e.g., authoritarian enclaves), are not wholly negative but rather double-edged. This study contributes to the literature on regimes by highlighting the existence of authoritarian successor parties, and by raising questions about this phenomenon to be explored in future research.

### The Future of Conservative Party-Building in Latin America

This study began with a discussion of the importance of conservative parties for democratic stability. Drawing on the works of figures such as Di Tella (1971-1972) and Gibson (1996), I argued that conservative parties promoted democratic stability by providing

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<sup>3</sup> On “hybrid regimes,” see Schedler (2006) and Levitsky and Way (2010); on “authoritarian enclaves,” see Garretón (2003), Valenzuela (1992) and Stepan (1988); on “subnational authoritarianism,” see Gibson (2005, 2012), Gervasoni (2010) and Giraudy (2010).

elites with an electoral vehicle to defend their interests, which reduced the incentive to “knock on the barracks door.” While the risk of coups has declined in Latin America in recent decades, coups or coup attempts in Ecuador (2000), Venezuela (2002) and Honduras (2009) demonstrate that it has not been completely eliminated. Moreover, even when coups do not occur, conservative party weakness still has the potential to diminish the quality of democracy: it may lead to what Huntington (1968) calls “praetorian” behavior, such as the violent movement for autonomy in eastern Bolivia in the late 2000s or the farmers’ strike in Argentina in 2008; or it may encourage elites to coopt non-conservative parties, causing the latter to violate their electoral promises and carry out what Stokes (2001) calls “neoliberalism by surprise.” In short, conservative parties still matter for democracy. The question of the future of conservative party-building in Latin America is thus of crucial importance.

Based on my theory of authoritarian inheritance, we would expect the future of conservative party-building in Latin America to be rather bleak. While coups and authoritarian rule have not been completely eradicated in Latin America, they have become much less common since the third wave. Even less common is *right-wing* authoritarian rule. Today, the only fully authoritarian regime in Latin America (Cuba) is clearly left-wing, and the most notable instances of competitive authoritarianism (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador), also have a left-wing orientation.<sup>4</sup> In this study, one of the antecedent conditions that I identified as crucial for the formation or non-formation of a conservative authoritarian successor party was the nature of the authoritarian regime. Simply put, it is extremely difficult for a conservative authoritarian successor party to emerge out of a left-wing authoritarian regime. Because right-wing authoritarianism has become less common,

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<sup>4</sup> On competitive authoritarianism in the Andes, see Levitsky and Loxton (2013).

and because my theory of authoritarian inheritance predicts that the new conservative parties most likely to succeed are those that are also authoritarian successor parties, we would expect few new successful conservative parties to emerge in Latin America.

The one possible exception—though it in fact provides additional support for my theory—is *Fujimorismo* in Peru. As scholars such as Urrutia (2011), Levitsky (2013), Meléndez (2014) and Levitsky and Zavaleta (n.d.) have argued, *Fujimorismo*, which emerged out of the competitive authoritarian regime of Alberto Fujimori in the 1990s, may be in the process of institutionalizing as a durable and electorally successful party. Emerging from a regime that was personalistic and anti-party, *Fujimorismo* would seem like an unlikely candidate for party-building. Yet, as an authoritarian successor party, it has benefited from several forms of authoritarian inheritance, including a popular and widely known brand, a territorial organization and a source of cohesion rooted in a history of joint struggle. As a result, *Fujimorismo* has grown into what is arguably the most promising party in Peru. Whether *Fujimorismo*, at present, qualifies as a conservative party, is more debatable, since elites have tended to keep the party at arm's length. In the second round of the 2011 presidential election, however, elites overwhelmingly backed Keiko Fujimori against the left-leaning candidate, Ollanta Humala, thereby raising the possibility that it will evolve into a vehicle for upper-class representation. If this metamorphosis occurs, it will mean another successful new conservative party in Latin America. However, such an outcome would not pose a challenge to my theory; it would provide further evidence in its favor.

In this study, I have presented a theory about one path to successful party-building: authoritarian inheritance. I have argued that this can provide conservative party-builders with some of the key determinants of party-building, such as a brand, organization and



source of cohesion. Nevertheless, it is possible that conservative party-builders could acquire these resources through other means. Three theories seem particularly relevant when considering alternative paths to conservative party-building. The first is Barndt's (forthcoming) argument about "corporation-based parties." As Barndt has noted, several Latin American countries in recent years have seen the emergence of parties created by individual corporations. Notable examples include Bolivia's Civic Solidarity Union (UCS), Ecuador's Institutional Renewal Party of National Action (PRIAN) and Panama's Democratic Change. According to Barndt, these parties represent a new form of political action by the region's private sector. While, traditionally, businesses might have supported a conservative party, he argues that it is becoming increasingly common for them to cut out the middleman and create their own parties. He argues that individual corporations can provide new parties with some of the key determinants of party-building, such as a brand and organization, and that corporation-based parties have the potential to endure over time.

Do corporation-based parties provide a viable path to successful party-building in Latin America? This seems unlikely. While Barndt has identified a fascinating trend, it is doubtful that many of his corporation-based parties will stand the test of time. Of the three cases that he discusses in most detail, one no longer exists (UCS), one has nearly disappeared (PRIAN) and one has a highly uncertain future (Democratic Change). Democratic Change has been the most successful of the three: its founder and presidential candidate, Ricardo Martinelli, won Panama's presidency in 2009, and the party performed well in legislative elections in 2009 and 2014. Like the UCS and PRIAN, however, Democratic Change appears to be little more than a personalistic vehicle for Martinelli. One illustration of this is the fact that in the 2014 presidential election, the party's vice presidential candidate was

Martinelli's wife, Marta Linares de Martinelli. As *The New York Times* noted, many viewed this as "as a thinly veiled attempt [by Martinelli] to hold on to and concentrate power."<sup>5</sup>

After losing the 2014 presidential election, Democratic Change's future looks uncertain. It would not be surprising if it followed the mold of the UCS and PRIAN and disappeared.

Another theory that must be considered is Van Dyck's (2013) argument about "the paradox of adversity." As discussed above, Van Dyck argues that, contrary to expectations, it is better for parties' long-term prospects to be born in conditions of adversity.

Specifically, he argues that when parties are born with low access to the state and mass media, they are more likely to invest in organization. Because organization-building in the context of adversity tends to be unremunerated and dangerous work, he argues that it is likely to select for committed activists. In the long run, Van Dyck argues that this increases the chance of success, since having a base of committed activists helps parties to weather early electoral setbacks. One important implication of this argument is that parties born under authoritarian rule may, paradoxically, have a better chance of success than those born in democracy, since authoritarian regimes typically deny opposition forces access to the state and media. Although Van Dyck develops his argument in a study of left-wing parties, there is no reason why it could not also apply to conservative parties. In fact, there is at least one example of a successful conservative party in Latin America that emerged under such conditions: Mexico's National Action Party (PAN). Born in 1939 in the context of Mexico's (at the time) left-leaning PRI dictatorship, the PAN faced conditions similar to those described by Van Dyck for the first several decades of its existence. As a result, it developed a committed activist base and a powerful sense of identity. While Greene (n.d.) has argued

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<sup>5</sup> See Randal C. Archibold, "Incumbent's Party Loses Presidency in Panama," *The New York Times*, 4 May 2014.

that spending its formative years in this way led to a “niche” orientation, whereby the party has been willing to sacrifice vote share for ideological purity, the PAN has nevertheless thrived since Mexico began its transition to democracy in the 1990s.

Does “the paradox of adversity” suggest a viable route to conservative party-building in Latin America? This option would seem more viable than the previous one considered. As mentioned above, there is no reason why, in theory, this argument could not apply to conservative parties. In addition, while right-wing authoritarianism has become less common in Latin America (and, for that reason, the chances of conservative authoritarian successor parties emerging), left-wing authoritarian regimes continue to exist. While the communist regime in Cuba is far too repressive for any large-scale organized opposition to emerge, the competitive authoritarian regimes of Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua might offer more fertile ground for party-building. These regimes would seem to represent “the sweet spot” for this theory: they are repressive enough to deny the opposition access to the state and media, but not so repressive that the opposition is annihilated or forced underground. In addition, all of these countries (except Nicaragua) saw their party systems collapse in the 1990s and 2000s and, in this way, opened up space in their respective party systems for new conservative parties. Despite these seemingly propitious conditions, the record of conservative party-building so far is not strong. Bolivia, for example, which saw the emergence of a powerful social movement for autonomy (especially among elites) in the eastern part of the country, has thus far failed to translate that momentum into a strong opposition party (Eaton, n.d.). Ecuador has also not seen the emergence of any strong opposition parties. Venezuela has seen slightly more progress on this front, with the emergence of parties such as Justice First and A New Era. So far, however, these parties

remain relatively small (neither has ever won 10 percent in a national legislative election), and have failed to fuse into a larger, potentially more significant party. The upshot is that, while Van Dyck's argument would seem to present a promising way forward for conservative party-building in some countries in Latin America, this potential has not yet been realized.

A final argument that must be considered is what Gibson (1996) calls the "conservatization of populism." This is the scenario whereby "populist parties" (by which he seems to mean all parties that do not have upper-class core constituencies) become "the electoral carriers of conservatism—modern guarantors of market stability with a ready-made popular base" (Gibson 1996: 228). This process involves not just "the absorption of conservatives into the leadership of populist parties," but, more fundamentally, a "core-constituency shift for these parties" (Gibson 1996: 228). In other words, such parties would replace their traditionally non-elite core constituencies with elite core constituencies, while retaining their mass electoral bases. The attraction of this option is obvious. It would allow elites to sidestep many of the difficulties of party-building, since, rather than having to construct a new party and forge a multiclass electoral coalition, they could simply colonize a preexisting one. This scenario was discussed in Chapter 5 in the context of Argentina in the 1990s. During the right-leaning presidency of Carlos Menem, many UCEDE leaders abandoned their party in favor of Peronism. Based on the belief that it was in the process of permanently transforming into a conservative party, they calculated that piggybacking on Peronism was a more viable strategy than trying to make their own small party a contender.

Does the "conservatization of populism" represent a viable alternative to conservative party-building? This seems unlikely, for two reasons. First, even when a party appears to be morphing into a conservative party, nothing guarantees that it will not shift

back. Here the case of Peronism serves as a cautionary tale for conservatives wishing to colonize a “populist” party. After spending the 1990s on the right, Peronism swung left in the 2000s during the presidencies of Néstor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-present). This left conservatives who had pinned their hopes on Peronism as a vehicle for elite interests without effective representation in the party system. Second, even if a party does not swing back to the left, it may lead to such a degree of “brand dilution” (Lupu, forthcoming) that it collapses. As former supporters realize that elite outsiders have colonized the party and altered its platform, they may become disillusioned and abandon it *en masse*. If this occurs, elites who pinned their hopes on the party are likely to find themselves, once again, without effective representation in the party system. The most notable possible exception is the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB). Born in 1988 as a social democratic party, the PSDB “moved rightward [during the 1990s], gradually replacing a traditional social democratic line with a more market-oriented approach” (Power 2001: 2007). In the process, there is some evidence that the PSDB has become increasingly popular among better-off voters.<sup>6</sup> While it is premature to label the PSDB a conservative party according to Gibson’s (1996) definition, it seems like a stronger candidate for the “conservatization of populism” scenario than other major parties in the region. If it is true that the PSDB is in the process of transforming into a conservative party, one reason why this may have been possible in this case, but not, for example, in the case of Peronism, is the gradual pace of change. Rather than moving to the right in one fell swoop, as Menem did,

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<sup>6</sup> See Hunter and Power (2007).

the PSDB's change has been a slower, more evolutionary process.<sup>7</sup> This issue has not been well-studied, however, and deserves greater attention from scholars.

### Authoritarian Successor Parties: Directions for Future Research

In this study, I have drawn attention to the phenomenon of authoritarian successor parties by examining one particular kind of authoritarian successor party: authoritarian successor parties of the right in Latin America. I examined why the most successful new conservative parties were also authoritarian successor parties, and argued that this overlap was not coincidental: these parties thrived because of authoritarian inheritance. Yet, while the topic of this study required me to restrict my attention to contemporary conservative parties in Latin America, it is clear that the phenomenon of authoritarian successor parties goes well beyond these geographical, ideological and temporal bounds. In fact, authoritarian successor parties are found in several of the world's major regions, occupy space across the right-left spectrum and have emerged in different historical periods. From East Central Europe (ex-communist parties), to East and Southeast Asia (e.g., Taiwan's Kuomintang [KMT], Indonesia's Golkar), to sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Ghana's National Democratic Congress [NDC], Senegal's Socialist Party), to Southern Europe (Spain's People's Party [PP]), such parties have become prominent actors in many new democracies. They are not an exclusively right-wing phenomenon. The ex-communist parties are the most obvious cases of left-leaning authoritarian successor parties, but there are other examples, too. In Latin America, two prominent examples are Panama's Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and

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<sup>7</sup> To use Domínguez's (n.d.) useful term, the PSDB might have diluted its brand, but it was never guilty of the sort of abrupt "brand abandonment" seen in other parties that moved from left to right.

Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), both of which grew out of left-leaning dictatorships and retained this orientation after the transition to democracy.<sup>8</sup> Finally, authoritarian successor parties are not just a contemporary phenomenon. Past examples in Latin America include the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO), which grew out of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's 1953-1957 dictatorship in Colombia, and the Odrísta National Union (UNO), which grew out of Manuel Odría's 1948-1956 dictatorship in Peru. The parties that Ziblatt (forthcoming) calls "old regime parties," which grew out of pre-democratic regimes in some European countries, may also qualify as authoritarian successor parties.

As discussed in Chapter 2, many scholars have studied the phenomenon of authoritarian successor parties. This is especially true for scholars of the post-communist world, who have produced a sizeable literature on how former ruling parties adapted (or failed to adapt) after the fall of communism.<sup>9</sup> In recent years, a new wave of scholarship has devoted its attention to authoritarian successor parties. In an important recent article, Slater and Wong (2013) examine a phenomenon that they describe as "conceding to thrive": the process whereby authoritarian ruling parties such as Taiwan's KMT initiate transitions to democracy based on the belief that they will prosper under democracy as authoritarian successor parties. Riedl (2014) has recently examined the role of authoritarian successor parties in creating institutionalized party systems, arguing that such parties serve as a "focal point" for opposition forces, which helps to structure party systems in new democracies.<sup>10</sup>

In his forthcoming book on conservative parties in 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe,

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<sup>8</sup> Both, for example, are members of the Socialist International. On the PRD, see Harding (2001). On the FSLN, see Martí i Puig (2010).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Ishiyama (1997); Ziblatt (1998); Kitschelt et al. (1999); Bozóki and Ishiyama (2002); and Grzymala-Busse (2002).

<sup>10</sup> For similar arguments, see Grzymala-Busse (2006) and Hicken and Kuhonta (2011, forthcoming).

Ziblatt argues that “old regime parties,” when strong, played an important stabilizing role in nascent democratic regimes. Many of these works are truly excellent; to date, however, most of them have focused on specific regions and, as a result, their findings are not well-known to scholars with different regional interests. One important initiative for the future, therefore, should be to promote dialogue among scholars who have worked on this topic and to try and glean generalizable findings from their works. Below I sketch two important avenues for future research: (1) variation in performance among authoritarian successor parties, and (2) the effects of authoritarian successor parties on democracy.

#### *Variation in Performance among Authoritarian Successor Parties*

In this study, I examined a number of authoritarian successor parties that enjoyed sustained electoral success (e.g., Chile’s UDI, El Salvador’s ARENA). I showed that these parties benefited from authoritarian inheritance, and argued that, paradoxically, this gave them an advantage over their conservative party counterparts with better democratic credentials. Yet, it is clear that not all authoritarian successor parties enjoy the same level of success. This was apparent even in some of the cases seen in this study. In El Salvador, for example, ARENA was far more successful than the PCN, despite the fact that both were authoritarian successor parties operating in the same country. Similarly, while Bolivia’s ADN technically meets this study’s definition of success, it is a borderline case, since it collapsed in the early 2000s and no longer exists. Brazil’s PFL/Democrats, though a clearer case of success, also began to decline in the 2000s, and its future looks uncertain. In other cases, authoritarian successor parties did not decline or collapse after a period of success; they never enjoyed any success at all. For example, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR),



which emerged from Peru's 1968-1980 authoritarian regime, received very little support, and the Patriotic Union, which emerged from Uruguay's 1973-1985 dictatorship, did even worse. Why do some authoritarian successor parties enjoy strong and lasting electoral support (e.g., UDI, ARENA), others enjoy virtually no support (e.g., PSR, Patriotic Union) and others still see their support wither over time (e.g., PFL/Democrats) or collapse (e.g., ADN)?

In Chapter 2, I introduced a framework that might help to explain this variation: the balance between authoritarian inheritance and what I called "authoritarian baggage." I introduced this framework to explain the formation or non-formation of conservative authoritarian successor parties, arguing that when the baggage of an authoritarian regime can be expected to outweigh its inheritance, would-be conservative party-builders are likely to distance themselves from incumbents of the old regime. The result is non-formation of a conservative authoritarian successor party. Arguably, however, the inheritance-versus-baggage framework can also help to explain variation in performance among authoritarian successor parties already formed. The reason is that party-builders may miscalculate. They may believe that an authoritarian regime has more popular support or backing from powerful actors than it really does—and, as such, calculate that an authoritarian successor party will benefit from significant inheritance—then receive a rude awakening at election time. When an authoritarian successor party forms under such conditions, the result is likely to be party failure, along the lines of Peru's PSR or Uruguay's Patriotic Union.

Another factor that cannot be overlooked—and that can help to explain the collapse of some temporarily successful authoritarian successor parties—is that of leadership and agency. Perhaps the most important instance in which this factor comes into play is with

personalistic parties.<sup>11</sup> If a party is highly personalistic, and that person then dies or declines in popularity, the party is likely to collapse. This danger can be seen in the cases of Bolivia's ADN and Guatemala's FRG, two highly personalistic parties. In the short run, their personalism was not a problem, since their leaders—Hugo Banzer and Efraín Ríos Montt, respectively—were popular. In the long run, however, it contributed to these parties' demise. When Banzer died in 2002, ADN immediately collapsed. Similarly, as Ríos Montt's popularity declined in the 2000s, the FRG's support dwindled and disappeared. Yet personalism is not an immutable condition. Some personalistic leaders do not cling to power until they die, triggering the deaths of their parties in the process. Instead, some leaders make a conscious decision to step back and “depersonalize” their parties. This process of depersonalization can be seen in the cases of the UDI and ARENA, two parties that, in their early years, had personalistic characteristics. Jaime Guzmán was reportedly very concerned that the UDI would become a “*Guzmanista*” vehicle, and thus stepped down as party president in 1987 in favor of Julio Dittborn. Similarly, Roberto D'Aubuisson stepped down as ARENA president in 1985 in favor of Alfredo Cristiani. These efforts at depersonalization help to explain why both the UDI and ARENA survived the deaths of their founders,<sup>12</sup> while parties like ADN and the FRG remained inextricably linked to their founders and, ultimately, sunk with them. One important area for future research is thus to examine why some party leaders are more willing than others to initiate processes of

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<sup>11</sup> Another area where agency may have an important impact on the performance of authoritarian successor parties is when deciding how to position the party vis-à-vis the old regime. In the case of ARENA, for example, Roberto D'Aubuisson made the conscious decision not to work through the PCN, but instead to construct a new party (see Chapter 6). This appears to have been a wise decision, allowing ARENA to avoid much of the authoritarian baggage of the old regime, while still inheriting some of its most valuable resources (e.g., ORDEN). This example suggests that the transition from authoritarian regime to authoritarian successor party is not an automatic process; instead, it is conditioned by conscious decisions by party leaders.

<sup>12</sup> Jaime Guzmán was assassinated in 1991, and Roberto D'Aubuisson died of cancer in 1992.

depersonalization, even if the result is that their power within the party decreases. In more colloquial terms, why are the leaders of some authoritarian successor parties (and parties more broadly) willing to “take one for the team,” while others are not?

### *Effects of Authoritarian Successor Parties on Democracy*

A second area for future research concerns the effects of authoritarian successor parties on democracy. Because such parties are often prominent actors in new democratic regimes, they are likely to have a significant impact on the stability and quality of those regimes. What is less clear is whether this impact is primarily harmful or helpful. On the one hand, authoritarian successor parties would seem to be harmful for democracy, for a few reasons. First, they may use their influence to hinder processes of transitional justice. For example, Ríos Montt managed to avoid human rights prosecutions in Guatemala for several years because of the parliamentary immunity that he enjoyed as an FRG congressman. Second, they may use their strength to block reforms to “authoritarian enclaves” left over from the old regime.<sup>13</sup> For example, the UDI has long used its congressional clout to help thwart attempts to reform Chile’s 1980 semi-authoritarian constitution. Third, they may help to prop up subnational authoritarian regimes.<sup>14</sup> Mexico’s PRI, for example, was defeated at the national level in 2000, but remained strong at the state level—where, in some cases, it governed in an authoritarian manner—then used these state redoubts as a launching

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<sup>13</sup> On “authoritarian enclaves,” see Garretón (2003), Valenzuela (1992) and Stepan (1998).

<sup>14</sup> On “subnational authoritarianism,” see Gibson (2005, 2012) and Gervasoni (2010).

pad to return to the presidency in 2012.<sup>15</sup> In all of these ways, then, authoritarian successor parties would appear to have a negative impact on the functioning of democratic regimes.

At the same time, the evidence suggests that authoritarian successor parties may have a surprisingly positive impact in other ways. In this study, I have examined variation among new conservative parties in Latin America, arguing that those that doubled as authoritarian successor parties were more likely to succeed. Because strong conservative parties are an important determinant of democratic stability, authoritarian successor parties in these cases arguably contributed to democratic stability. In his study of conservative parties in late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, Ziblatt (forthcoming) reaches a similar conclusion. Scholars have pointed to other positive effects that authoritarian successor parties may have on democracy. Riedl (2014) has recently argued that when former authoritarian ruling parties remained strong after transitions to democracy in Africa, they contributed to party system institutionalization. Because institutionalized party systems are important for the stability and quality of democracy, such parties inadvertently played a positive role in new democratic regimes. In a follow-up work to her groundbreaking book on ex-communist parties in East Central Europe, Grzymala-Busse (2006) comes to a similar conclusion, emphasizing the role of such parties in promoting robust party competition. More recently, Hicken and Kuhonta (2011, forthcoming) have made a similar argument in the context of Asia. Finally, Slater and Wong (2013) argue that the success of authoritarian successor parties in some countries may encourage democratization in others. Because of the success of authoritarian successor parties such as Taiwan's KMT, they argue that authoritarian incumbents elsewhere may be convinced to initiate their own democratic transitions in the hope that they, too, will prosper

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<sup>15</sup> See Gibson (2012) and Flores-Macías (2013a).

under democracy. In these ways, then, authoritarian successor parties may have surprisingly positive effects on democracy. In all likelihood, their effects on democracy are neither wholly positive nor wholly negative, but double-edged. This issue deserves further research, as does the topic of authoritarian successor parties more generally.

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